



## ALONE AT THE ALTAR

Nicole Contos, dumped in New York

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## THE BORROWERS

Best Christmas family outing

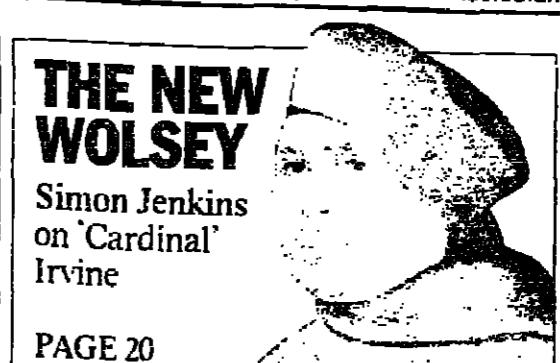
FILMS  
PAGE 35



## THE NEW WOLSEY

Simon Jenkins on 'Cardinal' Irvine

PAGE 20



MICHAEL POWELL

£50,000 limit on replacement 'Isas'

# Extra tax burden for bigger savers when Peps go

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND CAROLINE MERRELL



Geoffrey Robinson announcing the new scheme of bad publicity surrounding endowment mortgages.

According to the Inland Revenue, it has been possible to invest £82,200 in Peps and more than £9,000 in Tessas since their creation. With a booming stock market, that investment could have risen to £150,000 or even more.

The imposition of a £50,000 tax-free ceiling on those investments brought Tory accusations that the Government was betraying its pre-election promise that it would not raise taxes on the better-off.

The Government wants to persuade millions more people to save, and investors will be able to use banks, building societies and even supermarkets to set up their Isas. They will be able to save up to £5,000 a year — of which £1,000 can be in cash, £1,000 in life insurance and any amount in shares or unit trusts — up to the maximum holding of £50,000.

Accounts appealing to the low-paid should have low charges to ensure that small contributions are not whittled away by administration costs, and there will be a prize draw.

## How to keep investments tax-free

ONE option for those who have built up a fund of up to £200,000 in personal equity plans over the ten years since Peps were introduced and are now worried about paying tax is to place savings offshore (Marianne Curphey writes).

After putting the maximum £50,000 into an Isa, they could

then place the remaining £150,000 in an offshore investment, perhaps in the Channel Islands or Isle of Man. These should be in schemes run by life companies and known as roll-up funds and investment bonds which allow tax to be deferred, maybe until retirement when the investor might be paying a lower rate of tax.

Paul Freeman, tax specialist at Coopers & Lybrand, said that investors who held large sums in Peps and did not need income from their investments could also switch to a UK-based unit trust which did not pay any income, thereby avoiding income tax.

Even Labour MPs voiced surprise that the new scheme was announced by the multi-millionaire Paymaster General Geoffrey Robinson, who is the beneficiary of an offshore trust. And Mr Robinson further angered the Tories by saying that those hit by the changes were "well off by most people's judgment" and that they had for the most part "done extremely well out of their Peps and Tessas".

Explaining the thinking behind the Isas, Mr Robinson said they would reach a lot of people who had not been in the habit of saving. The described the new accounts as "much fairer, spread more widely and giving greater advantage to more people".

But Mr. Lilley said that hard-working and hard-saving families of "prudent middle Britain" would be hit by the change, which meant that those saved most would now pay more tax.

Industry experts also criticised the proposed ceiling. Fidelity Investments described it as a "killer" and said it would be lobbying hard to change it. Philip Warland, director general of the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds, said: "The major problem is that it will falsify the reasonable expectations of quite a lot of savers who are not going to be able to transfer all their Peps and Tessas. These are not rich people. I think it gets the Isa off to a very bad start. It is clearly nowhere near as attractive as a Pep or a Tessa."

It will be quite damaging to the public's perception of savings."

Replacing Peps, page 12  
Robinson's fortune, page 13  
Lending advice, page 21  
Boost for insurers, page 25  
Commentary, page 27



Mary Allen, Royal Opera House chief executive, was shocked by the personal nature of the report's criticism

## Report shocks Opera House

By DALYA ALBERGE  
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

MARY ALLEN, the chief executive of the Royal Opera House, was last night hurt and dismayed by a parliamentary report into its management and funding which was circulated to the principal figures yesterday. The report, produced by a committee headed by Gerald Kaufman, will be published today.

Lord Chadlington, chairman of the Opera House, cancelled a planned visit to New York after reading his copy and said yesterday that he did not recognise its description of Miss Allen at all.

He added that he was unable to comment further, beyond saying that he would be studying the report and calling a board meeting before making "a considered response".

Sources close to Miss Allen said she felt dismayed that the criticisms are so personal — particularly as she has been

in the post for only three months. "She feels she acted absolutely properly and, therefore, it is a shame that Kaufman hasn't shared that view," a friend said.

The report is understood to call for her resignation along with that of Lord Chadlington and members of the board.

It is also believed to question the company's future under the present management and to question that management's ability to handle public money.

MPs on the culture select committee launched the Opera House inquiry in July after widespread concern about its future following fears over seat prices, accessibility, the use of £78 million of lottery money and the handling of the two-year closure of its Covent Garden site.

There was also concern at the sudden departure of its chief executive, Genista McIntosh, and the appointment of the then Secretary General of the Arts Council, Miss Allen, by-passing official interviews. Miss Allen was grilled on the matter by the committee and she is expected to come under criticism for misleading them in her evidence, as well as sharing the criticism for the house's handling of public finances.

The house had been expecting the worst — having already been told at committee hearings that the management of its finances was a "shambles" — but insiders said yesterday that those involved were taken aback by the fierceness of the criticisms.

The house's £15 million Arts Council grant could be threatened and the MPs could call on Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, to intervene.

## Turner Prize for video artist

The £20,000 Turner Prize was won by Gillian Wearing, 34. Ms Wearing's work includes a video entitled *Sasha and Mum* which shows a middle-aged woman pulling the hair of a younger woman who is dressed only in her underwear..... Page 2

## Prescott move to raise council tax

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND MARK HENDERSON

COUNCIL taxes are expected to increase by up to 10 per cent next year under a spending package for town halls announced yesterday by John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister.

Labour's first local authority budget settlement for nearly 20 years was attacked by the Tories as another backdoor tax increase. Sir Norman Fowler, the Shadow Environment Secretary, told MPs Mr. Prescott had opened the way for major over-inflation increases. The Liberal Democrats called it a betrayal of the people who voted Labour thinking that it would deliver better public services.

The deal increases by about 3.8 per cent the amount of cash

## Backbench fury as benefits for lone parents are frozen

By JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Government fuelled the row over lone-parent benefits yesterday by announcing a freeze on payments for existing single parents.

More than 120 Labour MPs are already threatening to rebel over plans to cut payments for new claimants by £11 a week. But ministers had suggested that the 1.5 million lone parents now on benefit would be protected.

Yesterday, however, Harriet Harman, the Social Security Secretary, infuriated Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs by announcing unexpectedly that those already on benefit would also suffer. Those now claiming social security payments will lose up to £78 a year under the decision not to uprate their

benefits in line with other payments.

Ministers disclosed that the squeeze was partly because of the rise in inflation which has added £600 million more to the benefits bill than had been predicted in the Budget last March. The Budget Red Book had assumed inflation at 2.5 per cent, rather than 3.6 per cent.

Under the new proposals, lone parents will get no increase for "premiums" — the extra they are paid on child benefit, income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit. The higher rate of child benefit for lone parents will stay at £17.10, the higher rate of family premium in income support and jobseek-

er's allowance stays at £15.75 and housing benefit and council tax benefit stays at £22.05.

Ms Harman published a parliamentary answer containing the new benefit uprating for all social security claimants, showing that elderly people will gain a 3.6 per cent rise in the basic state pension, which will rise by £3.60, to £103.40, a week for a married couple and by £2.25, to £64.70, for a single person.

It was left to Keith Bradley, one of her junior ministers, to defend in a Commons statement the decision to freeze lone-parent benefits for the third year in a row: "The money to uprate these benefits was taken out of our budget by the previous Government."

## Two killed as sleet and snow make roads hazardous

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

WEATHER forecasters warned of further freezing conditions and snow showers across the country today after snow claimed two victims yesterday. Temperatures fell to below zero over most of the country overnight on Monday with snow in the South East and Cumbria causing hazardous conditions for drivers.

Motorists and commuters were advised to expect further problems today

after widespread frost overnight with the South East worst affected. Yesterday sleet and snow, combined with plunging temperatures, led to a spate of accidents, one fatal. Kaye King, 44, a recruitment consultant, was killed near her home in Upper Acomb, near Birstall, Oxfordshire, after a sports car skidded on ice on a country road and mounted the footpath.

In the North East, blizzards led to hazardous road conditions. A lorry driver was killed after his vehicle

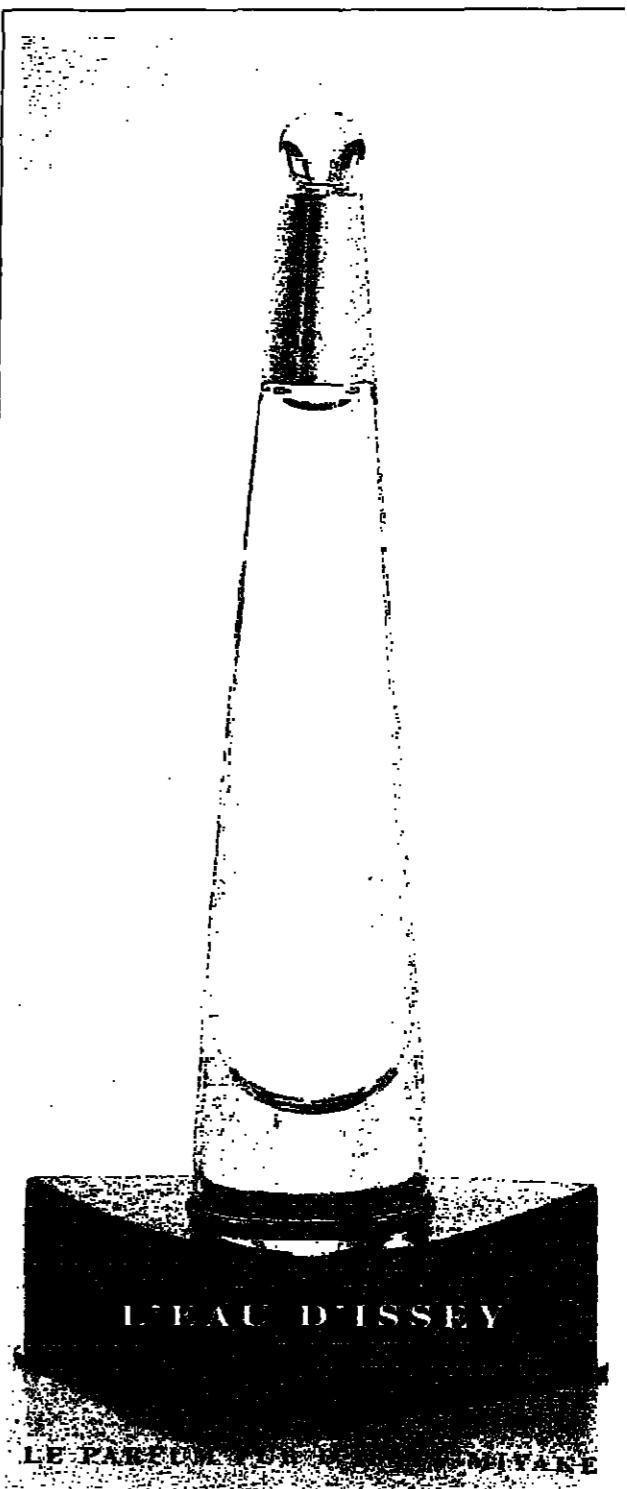
crashed and overturned on the A1 at Newton-on-the-Moor, near Alnwick, Northumberland. Another motorist was injured when his car crashed into the back of the upturned lorry.

In Cumbria, temperatures fell to 18F (-8C) and town centres in Keswick and Carlisle were blocked by heavy snow. A spokesman for Cumbria county council highways said that they had been forecast a clear night. "We followed the weather forecast of a clear night and then quickly had to mobilise

the gritter force early in the morning. But by that time the snow was already heavy on the ground and was freezing on top of black ice."

A number of schools were also closed because of bad weather. Bookmakers reduced the odds on a white Christmas from 7-1 to 6-1. A spokesman for the Met Office said it would remain cold but would feel milder as the week went on.

Photograph and forecast, page 24







# THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS.

"Drag hunting is a viable alternative to killing wild mammals. Such a hunt can follow a pre-planned route. It can have pre-determined obstacles to cater for all riding abilities, and a variety of slow or fast paces to suit all riders. It really could be fun. It involves enjoying the British countryside, riding on horseback and following the hounds, but the difference is that no kill takes place. Some 80% of British people agree that hunting should continue, but by following a drag with no kill."

MICHAEL FOSTER MP WORCESTER

"Can we tell children that it is alright to subject them (animals) to the torment of a long, protracted chase that is a highly inefficient ritual? Can we tell them that it is alright to make a social occasion of a hunt, to have a few drinks, to make it a celebration and a major event in the social calendar? If we do, we demean ourselves as a species and a civilisation. We cannot tell other countries that their treatment of animals is barbaric."

PAUL FLYNN MP NEWPORT W

"It is argued that if we abolish hunting we will abolish jobs. If we abolish crime, we will put all the police out of work. Does anyone seriously suggest that we must preserve at all costs crime and ill health because they keep people in jobs?"

ANNE WIDDECOMBE MP MAIDSTONE AND THE WEALD

"When deer are farmed, they are subject to the same animal welfare legislation as other farmed species. The farmer cannot take it into his head to chase his stock around the field before they are sent for slaughter. The domestic pet owner cannot torture his cat or dog for entertainment. The law already interferes with personal liberty to protect other sentient beings. Deer are as sentient as any farm animal or domestic pet and they need the House's protection from the barbaric sport of hunting."

JACKIE BALLARD MP TAUNTON

Lessons from life

## THE MP'S WHO VOTED FOR THE BAN

LABOUR: D Abbott (Hackney N and Stoke Newington), I Adams (Paisley N), N Ainger (Carmarthen W and Pembrokeshire S), R Ainsworth (Coventry NE), D Alexander (Paisley S), G Allen (Nottingham N), D Anderson (Swansea E), J Anderson (Rossendale and Darwen), H Armstrong (Durham NW), J Ashton (Bassetlaw), C Atherton (Falmouth and Camborne), C Attlee (Staffordshire Moorlands), J Austin-Walker (Erith and Thamesmead), T Banks (West Ham), H Barnes (Derbyshire NE), K Barron (Rother Valley), J Bartle (Leeds W), H Bayley (City of York), N Beard (Bexleyheath & Crayford), M Beckett (Derby S), A Begg (Aberdeen S), S Bell (Middlesbrough), T Benn (Chesterfield), A Bennett (Denton and Reddish), J Benton (Boote), G Berrington (St Helens S), R Berry (Kingswood), H Best (Leeds NW), C Bettis (Sheffield Attercliffe), E Blackman (Erewash), N Blaars (Salford), R Blizard (Wavertree), P Boateng (Brent S), D Barrow (Ribble S), K Bradley (Manchester Withington), P Bradley (The Wrekin), B Bradshaw (Exeter), H Branson (Peterborough), N Brown (Newcastle upon Tyne E and Wallsend), R Brown (Dumfries), D Brown (Kilmarnock and Loudoun), K Buck (Regent's Park and Kensington N), N Burden (Birmingham Northfield), C Burgess (Emet), C Butler (Castile Point), S Byers (Tyne N), R Caborn (Sheffield Central), A Campbell (Tynemouth), A Campbell (Cambridge), R Campbell (Blyth Valley), D Campbell-Savours (Workington), D Canavan (Falkirk W), J Cam (Ipswich), J Caplin (Hove), R Cassile (Wimbledon), M Caton (Gower), J Cawsey (Brigg and Goole), B Chapman (Wirral S), D Chaytor (Bury North), M Chisholm (Edinburgh N and Leith), J Church (Dagenham), M Clapham (Barnsley W and Penistone), D Clark (South Shields), L Clark (Edinburgh Pentlands), P Clark (Gillingham), C Clarke (Norwich S), E Clarke (Midlothian), T Clarke (Northampton S), D Clelland (Tyne Bridge), A Chwyd (Cynon Valley), V Coaker (Gedling), A Coffey (Stockport), I Coleman (Hammersmith and Fulham), A Colman (Putney), M Connarty (Falkirk E), F Cook (Stockton N), Y Cooper (Pontefract and Castleford), R Corben (Birmingham Erdington), J Corbyn (Islington N), J Corston (Bristol E), J Cousins (Newcastle upon Tyne Central), T Cox (Tooting), R Cranmer (Dudley N), D Crosby (Bolton NE), A Cryer (Keighley), J Cryer (Hornchurch), L Currie (Leigh), J Cunningham (Coventry South), C Curtis-Thomas (Croydon), A Darling (Edinburgh Central), K Darvill (Ulmminster), V Davey (Bristol West), I Davison (Glasgow Pollok), D Davies (Llanelli), G Davies (Croydon Central), R Davies (Caerphilly), T Davis (Birmingham Hodge Hill), H Dawson (Lancaster and Wyre), J Dean (Burton), J Denham (Southampton Itchen), A Dismore (Hendon), J Dobbin (Heywood and Middleton), B Donohoe (Cunningham S), J Dowd (Lewisham W).

D Drew (Stroud), J Drown (Swindon S), A Eagle (Wallasey), M Eagle (Liverpool Garston), H Edwards (Monmouth), C Erford (Etham), L Eltham (Liverpool Riverside), J Emms (Barnsley E and Mexborough), W Etherington (Sunderland N), D Fatchett (Leeds Central), M Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent Central), J Fitzpatrick (Poplar and Canning Town), L Fitzsimons (Rochdale), C Flint (Don Valley), P Flynn (Newport W), B Follett (Stevenage), D Foster (Bishop Auckland), M Foster (Hastings and Rye), M Foster (Worcester), G Foultz (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley), M Fyfe (Glasgow Maryhill), G Gallaway (Glasgow Kelvin), M Gapes (Ilford S), B Gardiner (Brent N), N Gerard (Walthamstow), J Gibson (Norwich N), L Gilroy (Plymouth Sutton) N Godman (Greenock and Inverclyde), R Goddiss (Birmingham Sparkbrook and Small Heath), P Goggins (Wynethaw and Salt E), E Gorlon (Romford), B Grant (Tottenham), J Griffiths (Reading E), W Griffiths (Bridgend), B Grocott (Telford), J Grogan (Selby), J Gunnell (Morley and Rothwell), P Hain (Neath), M Hall (Weaver Vale), P Hall (Bedford), F Hamilton (Leeds NE), D Hanson (Delyn), H Harman (Camberwell and Peckham), S Head (Halesowen and Rowley Regis), J Healey (Wentworth), D Henderson (Newcastle upon Tyne N), I Henderson (Harwich), S Hepburn (Jarrow), J Heppell (Nottingham E), S Hesford (Wiml W), P Hewitt (Leicester W), K Hill (Smeetham), D Hinchliffe (Warrington), M Hodge (Barking), J Home Robertson (East Lothian), J Hood (Clydesdale), G Hoos (Ashfield), P Hope (Corby), K Hopkins (Luton N), A Howarth (Newport E), G Howarth (Knowsley N and Sefton E), K Howells (Pontypridd), L Hoyle (Chorley), B Hughes (Stretford and Urmston), K Hughes (Doncaster N), J Humble (Blackpool N and Fleetwood), A Hurst (Braintree), J Hutton (Barrow and Furness), B Iddon (Bolton SE), E Isley (Barnsley Central), G Jackson (Hampstead and Highgate), H Jackson (Sheffield Hillsborough), D Jamieson (Plymouth Devonport), B Jenkins (Tarnworth), A Johnson (Hull W & Hesle), M Johnson (Welwyn Hatfield), B Jones (Alyn and Deeside), F Jones (Newark), H Jones (Warrington N), J Jones (Wolverhampton SW), J Owen Jones (Cardiff Central), L Jones (Birmingham Selly Oak), M Jones (Chwyd S), T Jowett (Dulwich and West Norwood), G Kaufman (Manchester Gorton), S Keable (Northampton N), A Keen (Brentford and Isleworth), R Kelly (Bolton W), F Kemp (Houghton and Washington E), J Kennedy (Liverpool Wavertree), P Khader (Ealing Southall), D Kidney (Stafford), A King (Rugby and Kenilworth), O King (Bethnal Green and Bow), T Kingham (Gloucester), A Kumar (Middlesbrough S and Cleveland E), S Ladyman (Thame S), J Lawrence (Preseli Pembrokeshire), B Laxton (Derby N), D Lapper (Brighton Pavilion), C Leesle (Shipley), T Levitt (High Peak), I Lewis (Bury S), T Lewis (Worsley), M Linton (Battersea), K Livingstone (Brent E), D Lock (Wyre Forest), A Love (Edmonton), J McAllion (Dundee E), T McAvoy (Glasgow Rutherglen), S McCabe (Birmingham Hall Green), C McCafferty (Calder Valley), I McCartney (Makrfield), S McDonagh (Mitcham and Morden), C Macdonald (Western Isles), J McDonnell (Hayes and Harlington), J McFall (Dumbarton), A McGuire (Stirling), S McIsaac (Clyethorpes), A Macmillan (Thurrock), K McNamara (Hull N), T McNulty (Harrow E), D MacPhae (Rotherham), F MacTaggart (Slough), T McWalter (Hemel Hempstead), J McWilliam (Blaydon), A Mahon (Halifax), J Mallard (Amber Valley), J Marek (Wrexham), G Marsden (Blackpool S), P Marsden (Shrewsbury and Atcham), J Marshall (Leicester S), R Marshall-Andrews (Medway), E Marthew (Carlisle), J Maxton (Glasgow Cathcart), M Meacher (Oldham W and Royton), A Meale (Mansfield), G Merton (Lincoln), A Michael (Cardiff S and Penarth), B Mitchell (Sheffield Heeley), A Milson (Darlington), L Mifatt (Crawley), L Moone (Kirkcaldy), M Moran (Luton S), J Morgan (Cardiff N), R Morgan (Cardiff W), E Morley (Scunthorpe), E Morris (Birmingham Yardley), M Mowlam (Redcar), G Mudie (Leeds E), C Mullin (Sunderland S), D Murphy (Wansbeck), J Murphy (Eastwood), P Murphy (Torfaen), D Naysmith (Bristol NW), D Norris (Wansdyke), M O'Brien (Worthingshire N), W O'Brien (Normanton), E O'Hara (Knowsley N), B Other (Hunstanton), M O'Neill (Ochil), D Organ (Forest of Dean), S Osborne (Ay), N Palmer (Brootown), I Pearson (Dudley S), T Pendry (Scarborough and Ryedale), L Perham (Ilford N), C Pickthall (Lancashire W), P Pike (Bunley), J Plaisted (Leamington and Leamington), K Pollard (St Albans), C Pond (Gravesend), G Pope (Hyndburn), S Pound (Ealing E), R Powell (Ogmore), B Prantice (Lewisham E), G Prantice (Pendle), D Primate (Bristol S), G Prosser (Dover), J Quin (Gateshead E and Washington W), L Quinn (Scarborough and Whitley), G Radice (Durham N), B Rammell (Harlow), S Rapson (Portsmouth S), N Raynsford (Greenwich and Woolwich), A Rees (Loughborough), G Robertson (Hamilton S), G Robinson (Coventry NW), B Roche (Homsey and Wood Green), A Rogers (Rhondda), J Rooker (Birmingham Perry Barr), T Rooney (Bradford N), E Ross (Dundee N), T Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney), F Roy (Motherwell and Wishaw), C Ross (Vale of Clwyd), J Ruddock (Lewisham Deptford), C Russell (City of Chester), J Ryan (Enfield N), M Salter (Reading W), M Sarwar (Glasgow Govan), M Savidge (Aberdeen N), P Sawford (Kettering), B Sedgemore (Hackney S and Shoreditch), J Shaw (Chatham and Aylesford), B Sherman (Huddersfield), R Sheldon (Ashton-under-Lyne), D Shipton (Stourbridge), A Simpson (Nottingham S), T Stannard (Bolsover), A Smith (Basildon), G Smith (Islington S and Finsbury), G Smith (Morecambe and Lunesdale), J Smith (Redditch), J Smith (Vale of Glamorgan), L Smith (Blaenau Gwent), C Soley (Ealing Acton and Shepherds Bush), H Southworth (Warrington S), J Spellar (Varley), R Spire (Dunfermline W), P Starkey (Milton Keynes SW), S Steinberg (City of Durham), G Stevenson (Stoke-on-Trent S), D Stewart (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber), J Stewart (Eccles), P Stinchcombe (Wellingborough), H Stoate (Dartford), R Stott (Wigan), G Strang (Edinburgh E and Musselburgh), G Stringer (Manchester Blackley), G Sturt (Birmingham Edgbaston), G Sundiffe (Bradford S), A Taylor (Dewsbury), D Taylor (Stockton S), D Taylor (Leicester NW), G Thomas (Harrow W), G Thomas (Chwyd W), S Timms (East Ham), P Tipping (Sherwood), M Todd (Derbyshire S), D Toots (Isleworth), J Trickett (Hemsworth), P Truswell (Pudsey), D Turner (Brighton Kemp Town), D Turner (Wolverhampton NE), G Turner (Norfolk NW), D Twigg (Hutton), S Twigg (Enfield Southgate), K Vaz (Leicester E), R Vic (Finchley and Golders Green), J Waller (Stockton N), C Ward (Watford), R Wareing (Liverpool West Derby), D Watts (Southgate), D Williams (Halesowen N), A Williams (Swansea W), A Williams (Carmarthen E and Dinefwr), B Williams (Conwy), M Wills (Swindon N), D Wimbold (Walsall N), A Wise (Preston), M Wood (Batley and Spen), P Woolas (Oldham East and Saddleworth), J Wray (Glasgow Baillieston), T Wright (Cannock Chase), T Wright (Great Yarmouth), D Wyatt (Sittingbourne and Sheppey), CONSERVATIVE: D Amess (Southend W), D Atkinson (Bournemouth E), S Day (Cheadle), R Gale (Thame N), J Randall (Urberry), Sir T Taylor (Rochford and Southend E), A Widdicombe (Maidstone and The Weald), J Taylor (Solihull), LIBERAL DEMOCRAT: R Allan (Sheffield Hallam), N Baker (Lewes), J Ballant (Taunton), T Brake (Carshalton and Wallington), P Burston (Sutton and Cheam), V Cable (Twickenham), D Chidgey (Eastleigh), B Cotter (Weston-super-Mare), E Davey (Kingston and Surbiton), R Fearn (Southport), D Foster (Bath), A George (St Ives), D Goris (Edinburgh W), M Hancock (Portsmouth S), E Harms (Oxford W and Abingdon), S Hughes (Southwark N and Bermondsey), N Jones (Cheltenham), C Kennedy (Ross, Skye and Inverness W), R Maclellan (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross), D Rendel (Newbury), B Russell (Colchester), A Sanders (Torbay), A Stibell (Hazel Grove), M Taylor (Tunro and St Austell), P Willis (Harrogate and Knaresborough), MINOR PARTIES: A Morgan (SNP Galloway and Upper Nithsdale), A Salmon (SNP Banff and Buchan), J Swinney (SNP Tayside N), A Welsh (SNP Angus).

Last Friday, Parliament acted to end over 200 years of cruelty by voting in favour of Michael Foster's Private Member's Bill to ban hunting with dogs. We thank the 411 MPs above for listening to the 73% of the population in favour of a ban (MORI). The people have spoken. Parliament has spoken. Now let's complete the democratic process and make it law.



IFAW  
INTERNATIONAL FUND  
FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

Lucky Bloke:

GEM  
RECOVERY...

# Cambridge high-fliers sink to quiz show low

John O'Leary on a University Challenge team who managed to amass the least points ever

CAMBRIDGE University acquired an unwanted addition to its list of academic distinctions last night when a team of undergraduates from New Hall recorded the lowest score on *University Challenge*.

The all-woman foursome answered only nine questions correctly in an hour, and at one stage registered a record-breaking low of minus 15 points after being penalised for ill-judged interruptions. Their final score of 35 points was five fewer than Birkbeck College, London, managed in the last series.

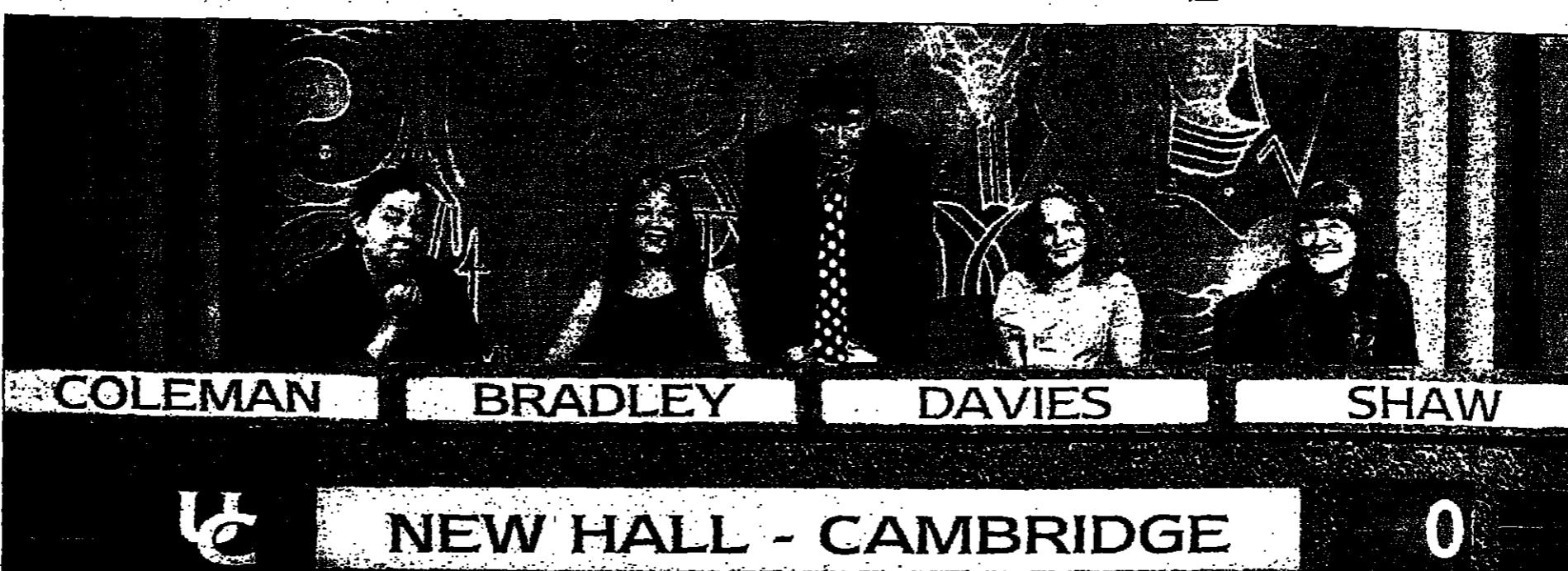
Jeremy Paxman, the question master, introduced the two teams with the promise: "More reassurance with the promise the taxpayers' money isn't being wasted on higher education — we hope." New Hall hit trouble from the outset as their opponents from Nottingham University answered every question to amass a 75-point lead.

When the Cambridge team finally buzzed on the question "Whose autobiography is entitled *Goodness had nothing to do with it*?" they forgot it was Mae West and slipped to minus five. Although they notched up minus ten shortly afterwards, Mr Paxman reassured them: "There's still time, New Hall."

Worse was to follow, however, before New Hall got off the mark to a loud cheer. Asked which politician entered Parliament as a Tory before being returned as a Labour MP in 1926, and then joined the British Union of Fascists, New Hall replied: "Winston Churchill" instead of Sir Oswald Mosley.

Relief came with the right answer to the question: "Which former ice dancer choreographed *Encounters*, which is based on six Paul Simon songs?" It was Christopher Dean.

At the halfway point, New



Jeremy Paxman with the team whose "terrible score", he said kindly, might have been down to bad luck: Rachel Coleman, Abigail Bradley, Sarah Davies and Rosie Shaw

Hall had staged a recovery of sorts with a score of zero, while Nottingham were nearing 200 points. With the end of their ordeal in sight, Mr Paxman pleaded: "Two minutes to go to salvage some honour..."

The Cambridge team buzzed on the question: Which house was purchased as a 21st birthday present for the future Edward VII in 1861? To loud cheers they correctly answered: "Sandringham".

The contest ended 335 points to 35, the lowest in the programme's 27-year history, although they avoided the biggest defeat. That remains the 415 to 65 drubbing of London's Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School by the Open University earlier this year.

As the show finished, Mr

Paxman told the New Hall team: "I want to be kind to you, but it really was a terrible score. I think it's the worst score since *University Challenge* began — in fact I'm sure it is. You were maybe unlucky."

Sarah Davies, the 21-year-

old experimental psychology student who captained New Hall, said later: "We were obviously very disappointed at the result and afterwards in true student fashion we got well and truly drunk. We could only put our performance on the show down to a

case of stage fright. Perhaps the pressure just got to us."

The rest of the team com-

prised Rachel Coleman, a natural sciences undergraduate, Abigail Bradley, who is reading chemical engineering and Rosie Shaw, a philosophy student. New Hall, which has

350 students, is one of two women-only colleges in Cambridge. Anne Lonsdale, New Hall president, said: "Losing on *University Challenge* is no reflection of the academic abilities of these students. The fact is they have gone on the show and good for them. She added:

"They must have had a run of bad luck."

Cambridge is preparing to

mark a breakthrough for

women in higher education.

Five years ago this week the

university ordinances were

changed to allow women to

receive full BA degrees.

## WHERE NEW HALL WENT WRONG

1 Which two initials encompass the use of non-discriminatory expression, an adviser to the monarch, an electronic device for storing data and a law enforcement officer?  
New Hall: OT (correct answer: PC)

2 Anything for a Quiet Life was the title of a play by which English dramatist, written around 1620 and thought by some to be a collaboration with John Webster?  
New Hall: Ben Jonson (Thomas Middleton)

3 Which politician entered Parliament as a Tory before being returned as a Labour MP in 1926 and then joining the British Union of Fascists?  
New Hall: Winston Churchill (Sir Oswald Mosley)

4 Which two-word popular name is affectionately applied to the flag of the USA?  
New Hall: Uncle Sam (Old Glory)

5 Which gemstones are found in deposits described as alluvial gravels, glacial till and kimberlite pipes, but only in the latter, such as those near Kimberley in South Africa, are they found in the rock matrix in which they were formed?  
New Hall: quartz (diamonds)

## Lessons from life

A NAIVE Oxford undergraduate earned a double first from the University of Life when he was fleeced by two women in Soho.

Peter Grieves-Smith, for the prosecution, told Southwark Crown Court that the student, who the judge ordered could not be named, to spare him further embarrassment, was approached by a woman in March and "told £20 was required for sex and £180 was a

deposit, and to wait in a pub. After resisting he had been说服, he left and met Jo Clarke, 28, and explained his predicament.

She offered to take him to offices where he could look at the books and point out the woman — if he paid £180 and waited in the same pub.

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# Swiss deny owing billions in Nazi gold

London conference sees a clash with World Jewish Congress, write Michael Binyon and Adrian Lee

SWITZERLAND clashed with Jewish leaders yesterday over claims that it still owes billions of dollars in gold stolen by Nazi Germany.

On the opening day of the three-day conference on Nazi gold, which has brought delegations from more than 40 countries to London, Thomas Borer, the chief Swiss delegate, said that such demands would jeopardise Switzerland's attempt to compensate Nazi victims and wreck attempts to work out a fair solution to the gold question. The conference is investigating what happened to an estimated \$650 million of gold looted by the Nazis which was handled by Swiss banks. It is trying to establish how to compensate survivors of the Holocaust and descendants of the victims.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, proposed at the opening of the conference that the 15 claimant countries should donate the money they will receive from the Tripartite Gold Commission to an account Britain has opened at the Federal Reserve Bank in New York for victims of the Holocaust. He said Britain, as a gesture of goodwill, was giving £1 million. Stuart Eizenstat, the American Under-Secretary heading the US delegation, announced a \$4 million contribution (£2.4 million) and a further \$25 million over three years.

Mr Borer said he could not understand a claim yesterday by Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, that Switzerland still owed up to \$3 billion. He remarked tartly that Mr Bronfman had said that the conference "is not about money but justice".

Mr Borer said: "We have taken actions that no other country has taken. The media can see which country is dragging its feet and which is taking the lead. We are not afraid of the truth, not afraid of our history. We have already set up a fund."

Mr Borer also flatly rejected any proposal to reopen the 1946 Washington agreement which settled Allied claims against Switzerland over its wartime gold trade. He derided calls by Senator Alfonso D'Amato, the New York senator, for greater Swiss payments, asking what would happen if every agreement going back to the Napoleonic Wars were to be renegotiated.

The confrontation was the first in a day of historical recollection and attempts to clarify the fate of looted gold. Mr Cook said the delegates "are here to look for compensation for a suffering that can never be expiated". The aim was to get at the truth and set the record straight. "We owe a duty to the living who survived the Holocaust and the Nazi persecution," Mr Cook said in a radio interview.

British officials said that



Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, and other delegates at the London conference on the fate of gold looted by the Nazis

several of the claimant countries had already promised to turn over some of their gold to the proposed fund. Yesterday Argentina and Luxembourg announced that they would contribute to the fund.

France insisted that it would make its own recompense to Holocaust victims. When it receives from Belgium and

Luxembourg some 2.2 tonnes of gold that France handed over after the war, the French Government will use the money for its own aid fund. France said this was fully in keeping with the Anglo-American proposal but a final decision would wait until the Mattooli report, currently looking at all looted assets.

finishes its work in the next few months.

The three-day conference, the brainchild of Lord Janier of Braunstone, chairman of the Holocaust Education Trust, will examine the historical data and archives on the gold transactions. The entire record will be published within three months. The 240

delegates and observers are paying their own expenses and the conference in Lancashire House will cost little to the British taxpayer.

Under the chairmanship of Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the delegates, including representatives of five Jewish and one Romani groups spent the morning looking at where the

looted gold came from and what happened to it.

Several neutral countries that also traded with Germany, including Spain and Sweden, said they were doing everything to unearth their war time records.

Germany said it would spare no effort to find any missing archives.

## Leading banks 'kept stolen ingots'

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

TWO of Germany's leading banks kept almost a tonne of gold stolen by the Nazis, according to a Holocaust researcher who has been trawling through recently unearthed records of the wartime Reichsbank.

Both Deutsche and Dresdner banks said yesterday they were surprised by the discovery and promised to follow up the leads contained in the microfilmed documents unearthed in Vienna by Hirsch Fischer. Both banks deny that they have anything in common with their wartime counterparts. Dresdner Bank — once known as the SS Bank because of its close links with the Nazis — is said to have obtained 313 kilos of gold. A bank spokesman said the information would be passed on to

historians from the Hanns Arendt Institute in Dresden who were compiling a company history. "We have asked our historians to carry out the appropriate research. We have no interest in hustling anything up," Deutsche Bank said.

"We'll make every effort to clear this up."

German banks, together with heavy industry, contributed a great deal to Hitler's war effort. Most also profited, buying, for example, confiscated Jewish property at discounted prices. After the war the boards of the banks were denazified and the system was overhauled. The wartime history of the banks, however, remains very sensitive.

## Forgotten Gypsies robbed of £80m by Nazis

BY ADRIAN LEE

THE Nazis looted millions of pounds in gold from Gypsies, but they became the forgotten victims of the Holocaust. A Romani delegation is to tell the conference today.

Up to 500,000 Gypsies were killed by the Germans and their supporters during the war and robbed of their gold which at today's prices would be worth £80 million.

The two-man delegation led by an academic who acted as a secret intermediary between eastern and western Romany groups during the Cold War will also point the finger at the Vatican.

Donald Kenrick, a Londoner and the son of a Polish Jew, will reveal new evidence about the gold of 28,000 Gypsies who were killed at a concentration camp in Jasenovac, now Croatia. Their gold, which would be worth more than £1 million today, was sent to the Vatican by the Ustashi, the Fascist party then running the country, it will be alleged. Catholic priests were in charge of the camp, Mr Kenrick claimed.

Another 20,000 Gypsies died at Auschwitz, he said, and their gold ended up in Swiss banks after being traded by the Nazis. Mr Kenrick said the Swiss had a moral duty to pay compensation. There was evidence that they refused refuge to scores of Gypsies who ended up in concentration camps.

Mr Kenrick said: "I am here to make sure the Gypsies are not forgotten. Many were robbed of their possessions and shot on the spot on arrival at concentration camps. We would like that money back."

Gypsies, mistrusted by banks and constantly on the move, across borders, sank their wealth into gold. The Romanies had their own word for the Holocaust — *Porrmos* — and survivors had never been compensated. After the war they were portrayed as thieves and misfits.

Many were living their final years in poverty, he said. About 20 Gypsy survivors of the Holocaust and their families lived in Britain. Throughout Europe there were up to 100,000 elderly survivors.

Mr Kenrick, who holds a doctorate in the Romani language from London University, will address the conference on behalf of the International Romani Union, along with Lars Demere, a Gypsy from Poland who now lives in Sweden.

## Drivers warned to turn down all Christmas spirit

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE Government prepared the way for tougher drink-drive laws yesterday when it launched a £2 million Christmas campaign that urges motorists to have no alcohol at all before driving.

The three-week advertising blitz to warn drivers that any drinking is irresponsible comes as ministers consider reducing the legal limit.

The slogan "Have none for the road" goes further than previous pre-Christmas campaigns, which have concentrated on the tragedies caused by drunk drivers. The new message is that any drinking increases the risk of having an accident that can cause death or serious injury.

Baroness Hayman, the Roads Minister, made clear the Government's hardening attitude to motorists taking to the road after drinking small amounts of alcohol. "They may think that they are not at risk but if they took one of our tests they would be shocked to find that their skills are impaired even after a small amount of alcohol."

The latest advertisement will show four drivers proclaiming that they are responsible for having only a small amount to drink before driving. A caption says, however, that the drivers are "responsible for killing, crippling, and maiming thousands in drink-drive accidents".

Police say that even after two units of alcohol such as a pint of beer or two glasses of wine drivers are less able to judge speed and distance and reaction is impaired. Young and middle-aged men are the worst offenders.

Ministers have already announced plans to consult on proposals to reduce the drink-

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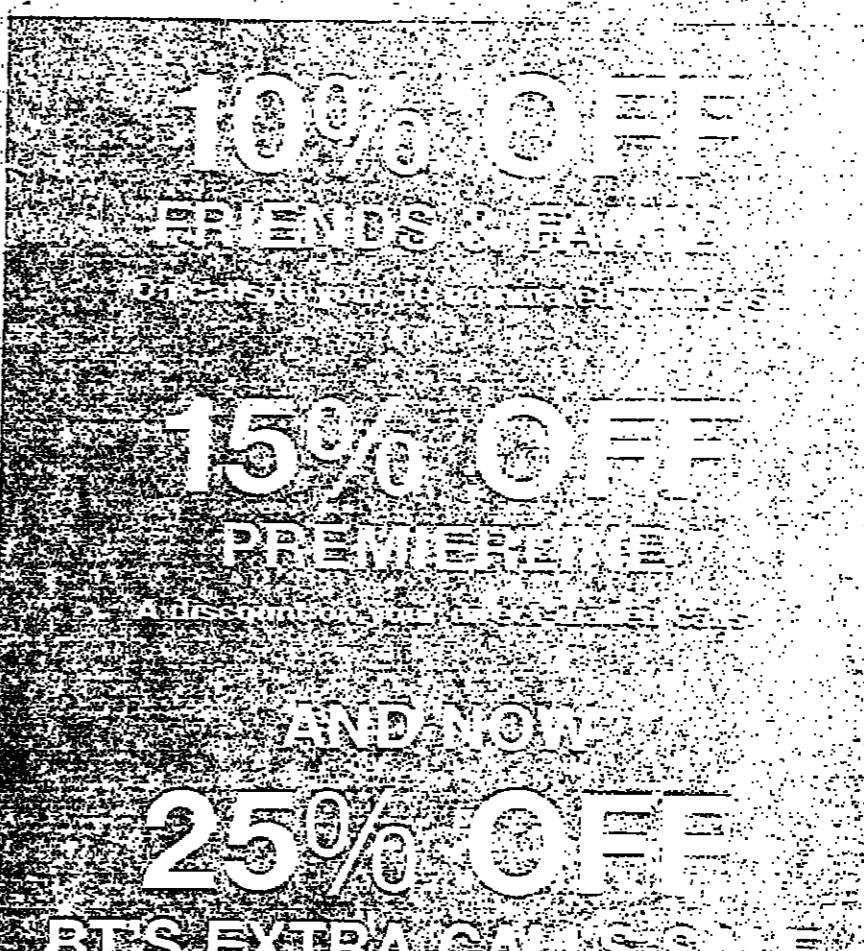
Campaign poster urges motorists not to drink

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# Spencers play out final act after £2 m deal

Earl faces questions from judge in Cape Town before divorce decree. Joanna Bale and Frances Gibb report

EARL SPENCER is almost certain to be forced to give evidence today to finalise the acrimonious divorce from his wife after he agreed a settlement estimated at £2 million.

The couple had hoped to keep today's final act of their eight-year marriage private, but the earl will be required to persuade a judge in the Cape Town High Court that the marriage is over. His lawyers are hopeful that there will be no attempt to question him about his marital infidelities, and that the bitter enmity of the past week can be forgotten.

It is believed that the couple reached a settlement partly because neither relished the

prospect of taking the witness stand during the hearing to determine whether their divorce should be heard in South Africa or England. The earl's lawyer, Leslie Weinkove, said: "The earl will testify in open court and the divorce documents will become public. There are no moves by us to keep it a secret, although the parties do not want to comment on the settlement."

As the rival teams of lawyers spent yesterday finalising the terms of the secret divorce deal, an estimated £2 million of the earl's money was transferred to Countess Spencer's bank account in London in

preparation for the formal confirmation of the divorce.

Lawyers for the countess said they believed they had emerged the victors, although they agreed that she was relieved she would not have to face the ordeal of giving evidence about her alcoholism, eating disorders and marital difficulties.

Maryly Le Follette, the solicitor from the London law firm Charles Russell, who led the seven-strong legal team for Countess Spencer — four British lawyers, three South African — said her client had achieved "the biggest settlement ever" in South Africa for a divorcing wife.

She conceded that the settlement package is well below what might have been achieved in the English courts, where the countess could have won up to £3.7 million. A decisive factor was the massive publicity surrounding the case. "The whole thing has got to have been a nightmare for each of them. Both were also concerned about the children."

Today will not be the end of the legal wrangles for the earl. He faces a court claim in the new year from the husband of his former mistress, Chantal Collopy. Don Collopy, a wealthy South African busi-

nessman, is suing him for £22,000 damages for the "alienation of the affection" of his wife. He claims he and his wife divorced because of her affair with the earl. Mr Collopy's solicitor, Andrew McPherson, said: "This action is still pending."

One of the countess's priorities will be to buy a house in London as a base for herself in Britain, although she and her husband are not expected to

## DIVORCE DEAL THAT HAS COST MORE THAN MONEY

Earl Spencer's wife accepted a £2 million divorce deal, but her adderess who had as many as a dozen mistresses. The £2 million lump settlement is far greater than the £300,000 deal he originally offered his wife. He also faces a bill of £500,000 for her legal costs.

The additional cost will affect his plans to renovate Althorp in time for the July 1 opening for the public to view the resting place of his sister, Diana, Princess of Wales.

His self-appointed crusade to tame the behaviour of the tabloid press has been scuppered. His tainted reputation means he can no longer champion new laws to stop intrusion into his private life.

At least two of his former mistresses are ready to publish more revelations about their turbulent affairs and condemn his behaviour. His neighbours in

Cape Town are scathing about his behaviour and warn that he will be a social pariah.

On the positive side, he has got back damning and embarrassing private correspondence and agreed a settlement before Althorp becomes one of Britain's most lucrative attractions.

Countess Spencer, who was originally asking for a lump sum rather than monthly payments as her husband wanted.

The image of her as a timid bimbo has been replaced by a more assertive figure ready to take on a domineering husband, upon whom she inflicted damage.

With her having to go into the witness box, additionally, her private life, involving her relationship with a local pharmacist, Guy Woods, will escape scrutiny in court.

She has also retained custody of the four children and friends and family say she can no longer be dominated by Earl Spencer.

However, she has settled for a fraction of what lawyers say she could have got in a British settlement and by withdrawing her allegations her ex-husband can deny the claims of his many affairs.

## THE SPENCER FORTUNE

Financial experts believe Lord Spencer can easily raise £2 million. He has a £100 million family estate, a £6 million personal fortune and £1 million a year income. Although he claimed in court that his money is tied up in trusts and offshore accounts, one source said: "You can always loosen the strings. He can easily borrow £2 million on his various assets and easily afford the interest payments." Documents presented in court show he has liquid assets of almost £2 million, including £420,000 in bank accounts and £1.141,000 in stocks and shares. Solid assets, including Althorp Park and a box at the Albert Hall worth £275,000 add up to £4,486 million. The total Spencer family fortune is put at £98 million, including Spencer House in Central London, thousands of acres of farmland, paintings and antiques. Plans for increasing visitors to Althorp will boost his income.

## Mandelson casts himself as saviour of Millennium dome



By NICHOLAS WATT  
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PETER MANDELSON cast himself as the saviour of the Millennium dome yesterday when he admitted that ministers almost scrapped the scheme after inheriting ill-thought-out ideas from the Conservatives.

In his first appearance before a Commons committee, Mr Mandelson said he was horrified when he discovered after the election that the organisers of the dome had a "blank sheet" of ideas to celebrate the

millennium. Asked by one MP whether he nearly abandoned the dome altogether, the Minister without Portfolio said: "The consideration was very serious indeed. The reason was that, while we very firmly supported the concept, we were worried about the management of the company."

However, Mr Mandelson rode to the rescue of the dome over the summer, after a rigorous review by the Government, because he said that Britain would never be forgiven if it failed to mark the millennium at the meridian. He told the committee

that he felt completely vindicated because the dome would be a "unique and inspiring opportunity" to educate and entertain 12 million visitors a year.

He added: "It's not a tacky theme park nor a one-year white elephant. It's a chance for people to think about their society, and hopefully improve it." Mr Mandelson offered the committee a glimpse of the dome's attractions. The most exciting entertainment would be an interactive computer game called "surfball", which he described as the sport of the 21st century, and a

15-minute rollercoaster ride. Mr Mandelson said: "It is going to be absolutely dramatic, fantastic. I am thrilled by the progress and that is why I am a happier Minister without a Portfolio than I was six months ago."

Mr Mandelson brushed aside a suggestion from Michael Fabricant, the Conservative MP for Lichfield, that Labour had opposed the dome in Opposition by quoting from a letter by Jack Cunningham that the party supported the project.

The minister joked with Claire Ward, the Labour MP for Watford,

when she asked him whether it would be like the FutureScope exhibition in France, which he visited last week. Mr Mandelson said: "No, I am sorry I didn't take you. Had I known I would have taken you on the train to Potters."

Bob Marshall-Andrews, the new MP for Medway who was named as the Member to Watch at last week's Spectator Parliamentary awards for his relentless questioning of Mr Mandelson, said afterwards Mr Mandelson's refusal to publish interim accounts until next September could lead to a "disaster".

Mr Mandelson said he hoped the dome would last for at least as long as the Royal Festival Hall, which is still standing 46 years after the 1951 Festival of Britain, organised by his grandfather, Herbert Morrison. Mr Mandelson gave the impression his passion for the dome is partly inspired by an injustice which his grandfather suffered.

He told the committee: "Herbert Morrison left office in October 1951. The first act of the succeeding administration was to tear down most of the vestiges of the exhibition. That was a shame."

## Couple sue GP over failure of vasectomy

By RICHARD DUCE

THE marriage of a father of three broke down after a failed vasectomy led to the birth of unwanted twins, the High Court was told yesterday.

Simon Barnes was 21 when he took two friends to look at the Parachute Regiment's state-of-the-art "Trainezium" combat training apparatus at its Aldershot HQ on May 13, 1984, the High Court heard.

As he leapt on to a vertical scramble net which was not secured either at its sides or bottom, it "billowed like a curtain in the breeze". He lost his grip and fell 15ft to the ground, suffering spinal injuries which left him disabled.

Mr Barnes, then a territorial private in 10th Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, was off duty at the time.

Jonathan Marks, QC, for Mr Barnes, 34, said that the accident was caused by the MoD's negligence in allowing the Trainezium to be kept unattended in a place to which the public had access in an unsafe condition.

Mr Barnes, of North London but originally from Malvern, Hereford and Worcester, is claiming substantial damages. The MoD denies liability.

The court heard how Mr Fulleylove, 36, had a vasectomy in 1991 but the couple's sex life was ruined because his wife no longer felt safe. The couple separated in 1994.

They are suing for the estimated £150,000 cost of bringing up the twins, Nathan and Jessica, now 5, with their

maturity. Further damages are also being sought for the "anxiety and distress" caused to the couple. Mr Fulleylove has given up work as a bakery hygiene inspector to look after the twins and other children aged 11 and eight. The eldest child, 16, lives with Mrs Fulleylove, 33.

Mr Fulleylove told the court he had the vasectomy after being referred to Dr Duggan, a local GP, by a family planning clinic. He stressed to us that it was a non-reversible operation and we had to be sure that we didn't want anymore children."

Mr Fulleylove said he was never shown explanatory diagrams of how the operation would be performed. In September that year Dr Duggan analysed a sperm sample and gave Mr Fulleylove the "all-clear" but Mr Goddard said a second test should have been made in November which would have revealed his patient was fertile once more.

Christopher Goddard, for the couple, said that the chances of a late reversal were one in 3,000 to 4,000. Had the couple been aware of that risk they would have taken further contraceptive measures until they were satisfied Mr Fulleylove was sterile.

The hearing continues.

## Historic lighthouse to be saved from sea

By ADAM FRESCO

AN HISTORIC lighthouse is being lifted and pushed back 50ft from a cliff edge in a £200,000 plan to stop it falling into the sea.

The 165-year-old Belle Tout, said to be the only occupied lighthouse in the country, stands on Beachy Head near Eastbourne and boasts fine Channel views. Architects plan to have the 45ft building raised and then pushed away from the danger of coastal erosion. When built it was 100ft from the edge.

The floor will be dug up and reinforced beams will replace the foundations. Hydraulic jacks will then raise it 2ft and keep the 600-tonne structure on an even keel once it has been placed on another set of beams called slide tracks.

The operation will take about six days but Mark Roberts and his wife, Louise, who live in the lighthouse, have been told their possessions can stay inside. The couple hope a Heritage Grant will help to pay for the move.

Belle Tout was last used as a lighthouse nearly 100 years ago. It was bought in the 1920s by the neurologist and author Sir James Forbes-Stewart, who entertained George V and Queen Mary there. It is now owned by Eastbourne council, which had it restored in 1955.

## Astronomers see black hole explode

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A HUGE explosion from a black hole in our own galaxy has been captured by radio astronomers at Jodrell Bank as it happened. The images show two streams of blobs of ultra-hot gas rocketing outwards from the black hole at velocities of more than 90 per cent of the speed of light.

The black hole lies more than 40,000 light years away on the other side of the Milky Way, in the constellation of Aquila the Eagle. Known only by its catalogue name, GRS1915, the object was discovered by an X-ray telescope on a Russian satellite in 1992. Rob

The only way to see in detail was to use Merlin — the Multi-Element Radio Linked Interferometer Network — six radio telescopes across England connected to give the effect of a single dish 135 miles in diameter.

"Most of it is sucked in and lost forever. The process is so violent that unpredictable explosions occur, producing these spectacular jets."

On October 29, astronomers were alerted by the Ryle radio telescope at Cambridge that GRS1915 had flared.



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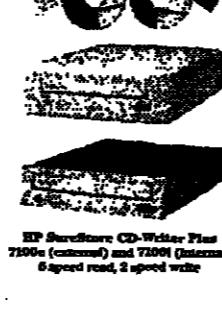
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# Cunningham tells 'hothead' Welsh farmers to cool it

BY MICHAEL HORNBY, RUSSELL JENKINS AND AUDREY MAGEE

JACK CUNNINGHAM told "hothead" Welsh farmers yesterday that any escalation of protests over cheap Irish imports would delay the lifting of the European Union ban on British beef.

The Agriculture Minister's warning came as a call by an Irish lorry drivers' leader for a tit-for-tat boycott by Irish shippers of British farm produce threatened to turn the dispute into a wider trade war.

Jimmy Quinn, head of the Irish Road Hauliers' Association, said: "This is a deliberate attempt to sabotage our meat export trade, which is of huge importance to our members. They should bring out the troops if necessary."

That might sound very radical but in this day and age it is not war with bombs and bullets, it is economic war. It is the survival of a major Irish industry."

Dr Cunningham said further violence would not be tolerated. "Farmers should not be misled by a few hotheads into thinking this kind of conduct is going to help their case," he said in an interview with *The Times*. "Far from helping them, it just

damages our standing in Europe at the very time when we are trying to build coalitions of support to get the beef ban lifted."

"Destroying other people's produce is a sure way to lose friends and influence."

The protests spread early yesterday to Fishguard, in west Wales, where 500 farmers blockaded the harbour, turning back six refrigerated lorries carrying Irish beef and lamb worth £500,000.

Tommy Murphy, a haulier from Carlow, who owns two of the six lorries, said he was angry that the police had failed to intervene to allow his drivers to continue their journeys. "You can be sure that if this was the port of Dover or the Channel Tunnel, there is no way that this protest would have lasted more than ten minutes," he said. "But because few English exports go through Fishguard nobody is particularly worried."

On Sunday night rioting farmers ambushed an Irish lorry at Holyhead port on Anglesey, North Wales, and threw tons of frozen beefburgers destined for Tesco stores into the sea. The farm-

ers claimed cheap imports were forcing them out of business.

Port authorities and police on Anglesey are bracing themselves for more trouble at Holyhead tonight as hundreds of farmers from across North Wales plan to gather at the Gaerwen auction market, about ten miles from the port. A raucous meeting at the same venue led to Sunday's clashes.

Peter Rogers, who chaired the earlier meeting, said farmers were angered by the lack of sympathy shown by Dr Cunningham for their plight, highlighted by government figures showing a 37 per cent drop in total farm incomes this year. "It is going to be very difficult to control the militants. Finding Tesco meat on that boat has really triggered the whole thing off."

Leading article, Letters, page 21



BEN CURTIS / PA

## Motor neuron victim dies with dignity at home

BY IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

A MOTOR NEURON disease victim, who launched a High Court action to allow her GP to administer painkillers which might shorten her life, has died naturally without needing drugs.

Annie Lindsell dropped her two-year court battle in October when her doctor, Simon Holmes, said he was willing to carry out the treatment.

Dr Holmes, who was present as she died at home, said: "She did not have the kind of treatment proposed in the legal case because she did not suffer from choking in the way she had feared. There was a reduction in her breathing ability but no pain. This has happened before and she has bounced back, but this time she slipped into unconsciousness and died peacefully."

Dr Holmes said that Ms Lindsell had been able to die in "dignified autonomy" because she knew he could help if necessary. "She knew the choice was available. She

didn't want me to kill her, she wanted every last minute of life, she loved life."

By the time Ms Lindsell, 47, a former air hostess from Teddington, southwest London, dropped her legal case she was wheelchair-bound and knew she was dying from the disease, which affects the nerves in the brain and spinal cord that control muscle movement.

Her fear that she would choke to death, like many of the three people a day who die of the disease in Britain, led her to ask the High Court to allow her doctor to give her a fatal dose of painkillers.

Dr Holmes refused to administer diamorphine without clarification that the act would be lawful. He changed his mind when medical experts at the court approved the treatment.

Ms Lindsell's partner, Ron Hicks, her sister, Suzi Galbraith, and Martin Seager, her best friend, were also present at her death.

## Muslim school may sue Labour

BY JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

PARENTS at a Muslim school founded by Yusuf Islam, the former pop singer Cat Stevens, threatened to sue the Government yesterday over a year-long delay in their application to join the state education system.

Islamia Primary School, in Brent, northwest London, is facing serious funding difficulties and has been forced to increase its fees. The school is one of a dozen waiting to hear if they can become grant-

maintained before tomorrow's Education Bill abolishes the category.

Leaders of the Seventh Day Adventist Church have accused ministers of using bureaucratic procedures to block a parallel application for the John Loughborough School in Tottenham, North London. Both schools won the backing of the Funding Agency for Schools but have been given no indication of whether to expect ministerial approval.

Yusuf Islam has written to Michael Richard, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Education and Employment, and this morning children from the school will present a petition to the Prime Minister in Downing Street.

Half of the schools with applications pending for grant-maintained status are religious foundations; two are Muslim and two Jewish.

A DFE spokesman said applications were still being considered and a statement was expected shortly on the fate of all those still outstanding.



Yusuf Islam: founded Muslim Islamic school

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## Moscow to free drugs teenager next month

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

A RUSSIAN court yesterday found a British student guilty of drug trafficking, but said that she would be freed next month after spending nearly two years in jail.

Karen Henderson, 19, wept with relief behind the cage of the courtroom in Moscow as Justice Natalia Arinkina imposed the sentence of 23 months. She was found guilty of smuggling and possessing 10lb of cocaine, allegedly found in her suitcase at Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow in

February 1996. The three-judge panel said it had taken account of her age, good behaviour, and that she had no criminal record. Her mother, Patricia, cried with joy: "I am lost for words," she said, thanking those who had fought for her daughter's release.

In the Russian legal system, acquittals are extremely rare and such a light sentence for drugs trafficking practically unheard of. A woman who admitted smuggling cocaine from Havana on the same flight is serving a six-year sentence at a labour camp.

However, the British teenager, who was brought up in Holland, maintained her innocence throughout the 22 months she spent in Moscow's notorious remand prisons. "Never in my knowledge did I carry any narcotics," she said in her final statement to the court. The prosecution had failed to produce any key witnesses, nor did it present vital evidence such as the false-bottomed suitcase and the cocaine.

The Russian authorities had come under pressure from British officials to improve the legal procedures, and the British press and public demanding a fairer trial. Tony Blair raised the case when he visited Moscow in October.

Henderson's lawyers are to appeal in an attempt to have her home by Christmas.



Karen Henderson as the verdict was read out



Patricia Henderson beaming as she leaves court

## City churches reborn as 'spiritual trailblazers'

Ruth Gledhill on a renaissance for the Square Mile's places of worship

PLANS to close two thirds of the City of London's churches have been abandoned, it was disclosed yesterday. Instead, the Anglican churches in the Square Mile are to be redeveloped into "spiritual trailblazers", becoming centres of peace, church history, religious education, healing and meditation.

In one church, a community of Franciscan monks is to be invited back to the City for the first time since the Reformation to run a retreat house and religious centre where workers suffering stress can go for spiritual relaxation. Others might become centres for the arts and music, public lectures, tourism and exhibitions. But all 39 churches will remain consecrated for regular worship.

While some are effectively closed, opening just once a week for visitors, the opening hours of all are to be increased to enable the millions of workers who commute daily to the City to find spiritual sustenance just a few minutes' walk from their offices.

The initial target drawn up by the newly formed City Churches Development Group, is to have all the buildings open on a regular basis by summer 1999.

The proposals, published at St Katharine Cree in Leadenhall Street, represent a U-turn on the controversial recommendations of the

Templar Commission of 1994. Church leaders in London had long believed that the City's 39 churches were surplus to the requirements of a resident population of a few thousand.

It was proposed to cut the number of active churches from 36 to 12, and parishes from 22 to four.

Although it was made clear that none would be demolished, the indications were that a conversion to secular use, such as a library, would be welcomed in some cases. There was, the commission said, no demand for 26 of the churches and they could become "reserve" churches. Some might be "locked up and merely maintained wind and water-tight", the report proposed.

But yesterday Canon Peter Delaney, Vicar of All Hallows by the Tower and newly installed as priest-in-charge of St Katharine's, where the City churches development group is to be based, said the Templar proposals were no longer on the table.

He indicated that the commission's report had proved a catalyst in uniting the clergy and laity of the City churches in bringing about the latest, more positive proposals.

"A church that is persecuted grows strong," he said.

"Templar brought the churches together in a powerful new way. It has made us

think and given us a common purpose."

He said it had not yet been decided which church might host the religious community. But an ideal church would be St Sepulchre Holborn, which has excellent acoustics and suitable living accommodation, but is without a vicar.

Open once a week, it is being kept alive by a committed volunteer team of laity.

St Dunstan-in-the-East is attached to Canon Delaney's main church of All Hallows and already serves as a centre of healing, with reflexologists, counsellors and others practising there. But Canon Delaney believes another church needs to be set aside to redevelop the City's religious life. In the

monastic sense. "This church would have a residence out of which a small Anglican community, probably Franciscans, would work. They would follow the monastic hours of prayers, would offer counselling and would provide a still centre of quietness in the City."

A church spokesman said the Franciscans would "almost certainly" be the first religious community in the City since the Reformation. Most Anglican orders were established in the 19th century.

Canon Delaney said: "People here work under enormous stress. They make long journeys from their home and spend most of their time in the City. They need the City churches as places of tranquillity and peace, and also places where they can get professional advice."

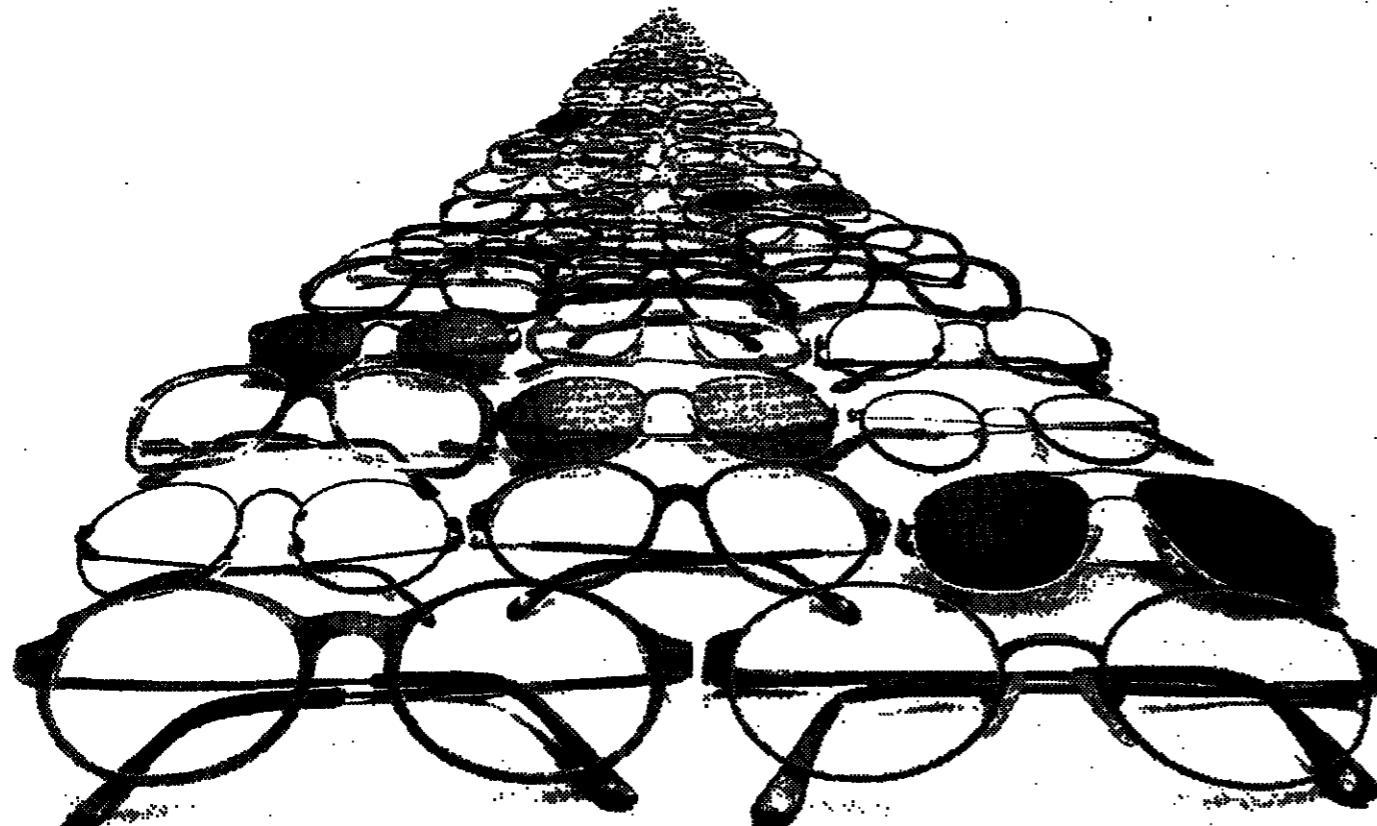
St Ethelburga's, the City's smallest medieval church, damaged by an IRA bomb, is being restored for conversion into an ecumenical centre for peace and reconciliation.

"Saints and Sinners" pilgrimage trails will be themed around historical figures such as Captain Cooke, William Penn and Samuel Pepys. Educational programmes will be developed around the national curriculum using churches such as St Bride's, Fleet Street, St James Garlickhythe and St Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe.



All Hallows by the Tower, one of the City churches

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OPTICIANS

## Coroner urges safety rethink after divers die

BY STEPHEN FARRELL

A CORONER yesterday called on the world's largest diver-training organisation to change its procedures after the deaths of three inexperienced scuba divers in two months.

Glyn Beeson, Patrick Scanlon and Claude Man drowned soon after completing courses run by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI). They were all said to have panicked.

James Symington, the Leicestershire Coroner, made four recommendations. He said diver-training bodies should: carry out regular audits of instructors; provide training manuals; encourage newly qualified students to take further lessons; and all those taking courses should be required to provide medical certificates from GPs.

His comments followed criticisms of the association by police and safety experts during inquests into the deaths at the Stoney Cove Diving Centre, near Hinckley, Leicestershire, the largest inland diving centre in Britain.

Mr Symington said he had listened carefully to police and Health and Safety Executive evidence that the cove was not to blame, and that panic and inexperience were a factor in each case. The recommendations will be forwarded to the PADI-licensed Adventure Divers Centre, in Enfield, North London, in July this year. Two of his four qualifying divers had only been in three metres instead of the required five metres.

At earlier inquests the coroner heard that Mr Beeson, 48, from Cannock, Staffordshire, and Mr Scanlon, 37, from Leicester, both panicked and drowned after making similar safety mistakes. Like Mr Man they were PADI-trained but had dived deeper than advised on their courses. None of the three trained at Stoney Cove.

Mr Symington recorded verdicts of accidental death on all three men.

## Police attack training after divers' deaths

How The Times disclosed police fears in October

## Soldier is jailed for Cyprus burglaries

FROM MICHAEL THEODOROU IN LARNACA

A BRITISH soldier serving in Cyprus was sent to prison for six months yesterday after pleading guilty to a series of burglaries. Keith Hollywood, of the 1st Battalion, the King's Royal Hussars, was caught when police traced a 42-minute phone call he had made to a friend in England from a restaurant he was burgling.

Hollywood, 23, admitted four burglaries in 80 days earlier this year. The court heard that his accomplice in the spate of thefts from pubs and restaurants, which mainly involved electrical goods worth a total of several thousand pounds, was absent without leave from the Army and had fled Cyprus.

The judge accepted that Hollywood had become a heavy drinker as a result of family problems but said the offence warranted a prison sentence, even though that meant an automatic discharge from the Army.

In the same court in Larnaca, two other privates from the same battalion were each fined £850 after they admitted causing more than £2,700 damage to a luxury hotel while drunk. The judge said he did not jail Carl Towns, from Liverpool, and Philip Hughes, from Manchester, both 19, because he did not want to ruin their army careers.

Both have been absent without leave since early October from the 800-strong battalion, which is currently on military exercises in Kuwait, and face disciplinary action from the Army.

Hollywood will serve his sentence in the island's only prison, in Nicosia, which holds three Royal Green Jackets who were sentenced to life for sexually assaulting and killing Louise Jensen, a Danish tour guide, three years ago.

## Pupils get a head start with shampoo remedy for asthma

BY IAN MURRAY

FIVE schoolgirls won a £2,000 prize yesterday for research which shows that using anti-dandruff shampoo helps asthmatics to breathe more easily.

Their findings have prompted the National Heart and Lung Institute to recommend that asthma sufferers switch to anti-dandruff shampoo.

The girls, aged 12 and 13, belong to a lunchtime science club at Cavendish School in Eastbourne, East Sussex. They decided to carry out hairwashing tests after reading a report in

the period the children used the anti-dandruff shampoo. Asthmatic symptoms were reduced as breathing capacity rose by 10 per cent.

Last year the Health Matters award presented by SmithKline Beecham also went to a school researching asthma, which affects 7.5 per cent of children aged 5 to 15. Pupils from Sirionside Secondary School on Orkney had investigated the high incidence of the illness on the island.

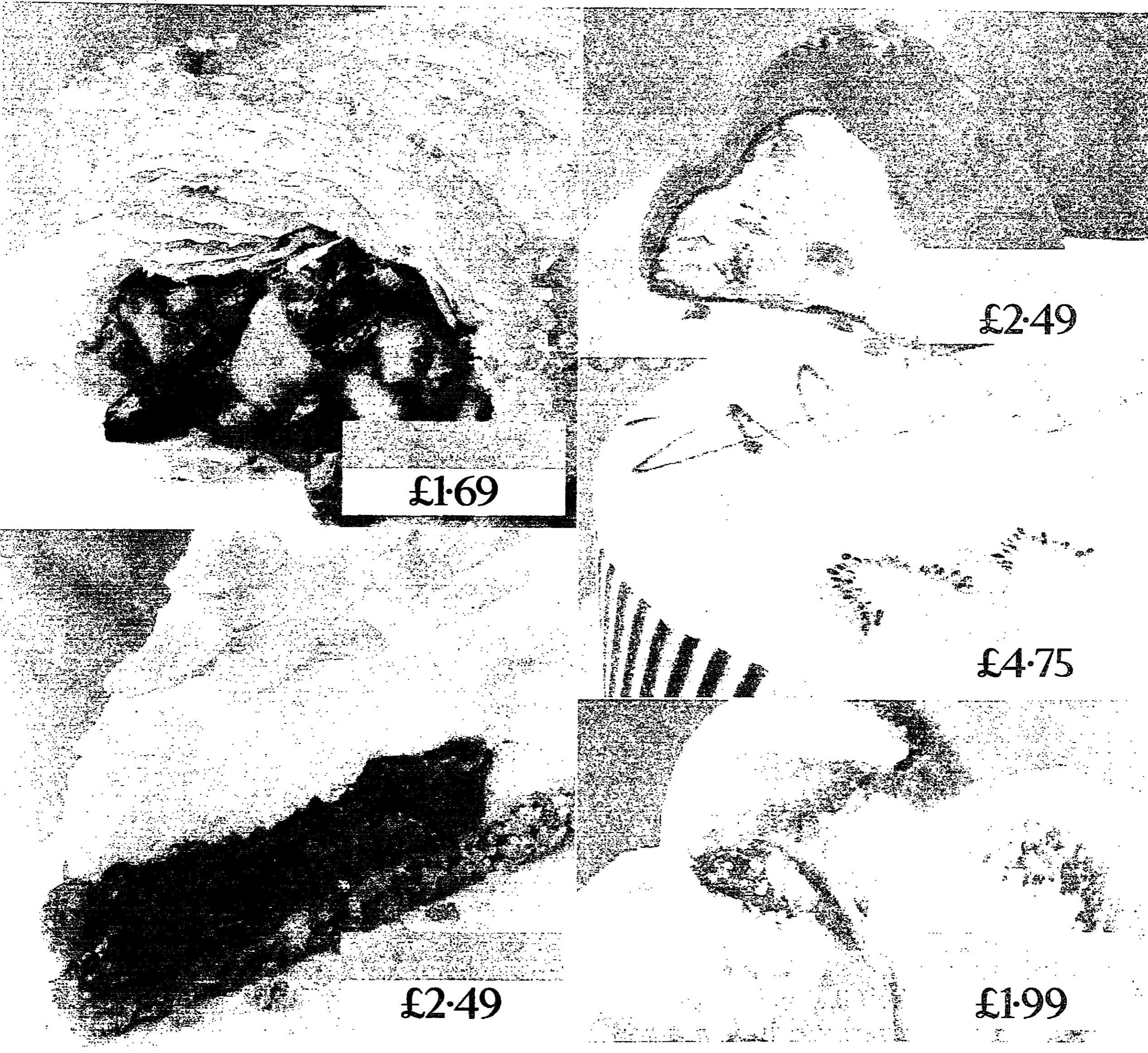
Apart from the £2,000 award for their school, the children have won £500 for Asthma Research, their chosen charity.

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Who says you  
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at Christmas?



Christmas at Sainsbury's





# Gore goes to Kyoto with new deal on emissions

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

AMERICA last night appeared to have made a dramatic new compromise to cut greenhouse gases as Al Gore, the Vice-President, prepared to walk a political tightrope at the United Nations summit on global warming in Kyoto.

The United States, facing a cool greeting in Japan for its modest initial stance in the talks, yesterday went on the diplomatic offensive, offering a concession that proposed reductions by industrialised nations of up to 5 per cent from their 1990 levels in the years 2008 to 2012.

Under pressure from domestic industries reliant on fossil fuel, America previously had said that the industrialised nations should reduce emissions of greenhouse gases to 1990 levels in those years, a proposal that European countries condemned as too weak. Both Britain and Germany favour a cut of 15 per cent.

The latest concession, reported by *Yomiuri Shimbun*, appeared to be an attempt to smooth the path for Mr Gore whose decision to join the Kyoto talks next Monday was made at the eleventh hour.

After much discussion at the White House, the Vice-President, who is also the author of *Earth in the Balance*, a definitive work on global warming, finally agreed to fly to Japan. He will spend just 12 hours on the ground, address the 1500 delegates from more than 160

countries but take no part in the official negotiation.

Even after President Clinton announced the decision to send his deputy, Mr Gore tried to dampen expectations about what may be accomplished in Kyoto. "We are prepared to walk away from an agreement that we don't think will work," he said.

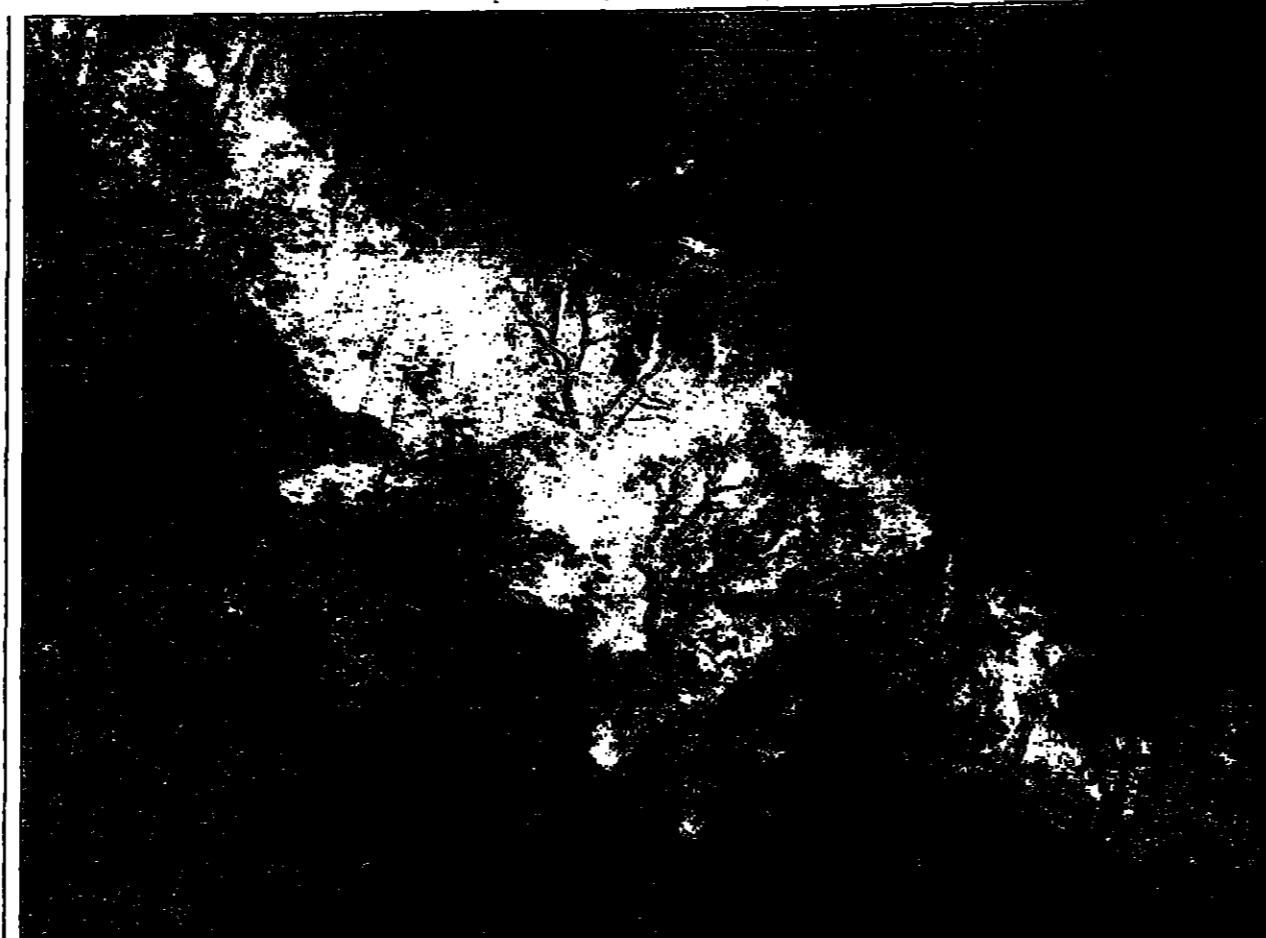
The White House had earlier played down the possibility of either Mr Clinton or Mr Gore attending the Kyoto talks. But the Vice-President, with an eye to his presidential ambitions in 2000, had been facing criticism among his

strong allies in the environmental movement. Environmentalists were concerned that his brief appearance as a knight in shining armour would merely be viewed as a token to deflect criticism from

the position taken by the United States, the world's biggest polluter.

America has made it clear that any compromise must be deemed realistic by its industrial base at home and that is certain to differ substantially from plans offered by the European Union to limit carbon monoxide and other gases in the millennium.

Negotiators for the EU said the impasse between the United States and the Third World could destroy the entire talks but said Europe was hoping to offer itself as a broker to end the deadlock.



One of hundreds of bushfires rages near Sydney yesterday as, above right, a resident stands in front of the smoking ruins of his home at Menai on the city's southern outskirts

WILLIAM WEST/AFP



PETER PARKER/REUTERS



A man and his three children flee their home in Menai as a firestorm, whipped up by gales, races down on the Sydney suburb. Up to 20 homes were destroyed in this area alone and a thick pall of smoke hangs over the city

WILLIAM WEST/AFP

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Netanyahu



العاصمة  
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# Mrs Mandela's daughter faces torture claim

THE youngest daughter of President Mandela was yesterday alleged to have joined her mother in torture sessions and was implicated as an accessory in at least one killing in evidence to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

At the hearing into the activities of Mrs Madikizela-Mandela and her gang of thuggish bodyguards, the so-called Mandela United Football Club, Zindziwa Mandela, 37, smiled and chewed gum as Gift Ntombeni, a former member of the club, said she had "taken after her mother".

Mr Ntombeni added: "She is capable of any deed whatsoever."

The picture of the Mandela home that emerged from yesterday's evidence was a place familiar with paranoia, betrayal, torture and murder.

Dressed in a white polka dot top and black skirt, Ms Mandela smiled and shook her head when Mr Ntombeni said that either she or her mother had ordered the assassination of Tholi Dlamini, a member of the club who had said he wanted to leave to pursue his interest in ballroom dancing.

Mr Ntombeni said he had witnessed the murder of Tholi, 49, who was shot by Sizwe Sithole, Zini's lover at the time, in 1988. Ms Mandela had four children by different partners, including Sithole, during the 1980s when she was living with her mother in the Soweto mansion which was also the headquarters of the football club.

Born shortly before President Mandela began his 27 years in prison, Ms Mandela was brought up by her mother, who had a succession of lovers during the years when she was not herself in detention.

Inside the Mandela man-

**Winnie's home was the setting for paranoia and betrayal, writes Sam Kiley**

time, in 1988, Ms Mandela had four children by different partners, including Sithole, during the 1980s when she was living with her mother in the Soweto mansion which was also the headquarters of the football club.

On another occasion Ms Mandela "carved the letters ANC into the chest and back" of a victim hunted down by other members of the club, Mr Ntombeni said. "She did it with a plastic implement."

The club selected ordinary

victims for its "hunts" from a book kept at the gates of the home in which local people would write the names of "troublemakers".

Mrs Mandela, 63, and her daughter would wait at home while "we would go out and hunt that person down and get them back to the yard ... we would beat them and burn their feet. Mrs Mandela or

Zini would lead the assaults."

Mr Ntombeni said: "He decided to leave the club after Ms Mandela became

furious that he had reported the death of a club member to Sithole, her lover. "She asked me why had I told Sizwe and called me an *impimpini* (informant). I realised I was no longer safe."

A second convicted murderer meanwhile told the commission that Mrs Mandela

refused to as an informer."

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# Sharif wins all as Pakistan state crumbles

THE President of Pakistan resigned last night after losing a power struggle with Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister.

It took the Pakistan Army, desperate to avoid a coup, to save what is left of a crumbling democracy. The Islamic state, exhausted by weeks of conflict, has been left in constitutional and economic chaos.

Mr Sharif now looks unsavable, his authoritarian tendencies well established, the army unwilling to topple him and the National Assembly firmly under his control. No elected leader has enjoyed such power. With so few restraints, there will be overwhelming temptation to move towards a more dictatorial style of government.

President Leghari, in an emotional farewell speech from the presidential palace, said that he held the constitution above self-interest: hardly a convincing comment after a long battle that has almost destroyed vital government and judicial institutions.

The Supreme Court has in effect collapsed in a mutiny against the Chief Justice, also locked in a losing fight with Mr Sharif. He will be ousted soon — another victim of the Prime Minister's power.

Recent events are a calamity for a country with no centres

**Constitutional chaos reigns in Islamabad, Christopher Thomas reports**

of sustainable power save for the army. Mr Leghari would not have gone without being pushed, however subtly, by the generals. They were bound to engineer the Prime Minister's survival because the next alternative was martial law, a fact that emboldened Mr Sharif to take on two such important institutions.

The office of the presidency, once treated with respect, is now discredited by the dirty tactics of the past weeks. The higher judiciary has been soiled by its political partiality. Pakistan has moved a notch closer to becoming a failed state and some argue it already is one. Islamic extremists sense their time may be coming as the nation staggers towards one of its greatest financial crises.

Sajjad Ali Shah, the Chief Justice, who fought Mr Sharif over who had the right to

appoint senior judges, yesterday restored the authority of the President to dismiss the Prime Minister, a desperate last attempt to get rid of Mr Sharif. It was backed by the President and the Government immediately began moves to impeach him.

Rebel judges challenged Mr Sharif's right to make the ruling, leaving the authority of the nation's ultimate legal arbiter in tatters. In effect, there is no longer a Supreme Court in Pakistan. Mr Sharif will ensure that the next President and Chief Justice are to his liking. He is considering various constitutional changes further to entrench his authority.

Every government elected since the end of martial law in 1985 has been dismissed by the President, including Mr Sharif's in his first term of office. Benazir Bhutto's administration was dismissed last year under the same provision. Both had fallen foul of the army. Mr Sharif used his huge parliamentary majority eight months ago to remove the power of dismissal.

Never has Pakistan faced such a prolonged constitutional mess. Nor has it put its parliamentary democracy so decisively on the line since its restoration in 1988. Mr Sharif raised the stakes on Monday night by attacking the Chief Justice and the President on television, accusing them of conspiring against him. That, it turns out, was a reasonable interpretation.

Government in Islamabad remains at a standstill and the stock market has fallen. Foreign exchange reserves have plunged. In another era the army would have taken over. This time, the looming economic crisis doubtless deterred it from doing so, given the certainty that international financial institutions would have shunned a nation led by military dictators.



Bags of energy: Chinese farmers near the Zhongyuan oilfields in the central province of Henan carry home plastic bags filled with natural gas which they collected illegally from roadside wells. Oil companies lose £15 million a year through thefts of the gas, used for cooking and heating

## Father wins plea over killing disabled girl

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

IN AN unprecedented verdict that outraged disabled rights groups yesterday, a Canadian farmer convicted of killing his handicapped daughter was exempted from the mandatory sentence for second degree murder and instead jailed for a year.

Robert Latimer, 44, had confessed that four years ago he killed Tracy, 12, as an act of mercy to spare her the increasing horrors of encroaching cerebral palsy.

Twice convicted of second degree murder, Latimer's case has become both a *cause célèbre* and a lightning rod in the debate over euthanasia in Canada, a country that enshrines the rights of disabled people at the heart of its Constitution.

In a decision which dismayed the disabled community last night, however, a judge for the first time in Canadian

history swept aside the mandatory minimum sentence of 25 years and ordered Latimer to spend one year behind bars and 364 days on probation at his wheat farm in the western province of Saskatchewan. Judge Ted Noble said a mandatory life sentence would be a "cruel and unusual punishment".

His ruling was condemned by disabled groups which said it was a sign of effective support for the "barnyard ethics" of killing the weak and infirm. A coalition of organisations is campaigning to have the verdict overturned through the Canadian Supreme Court.

"We are horrified," said Diane Richler of the Canadian Association for Community Living, an advocacy group for the disabled. "This verdict is terrifying for anyone who has a disability in Canada. Tracy

Latimer did not choose to die. She was murdered and justice should be served," Latimer admitted that in October 1993, while his wife and three other children were at church, he carried Tracy out of the family farmhouse in Wilkie and placed her in his pickup truck.

After feeding a pipe from the exhaust into the cab, he left the engine running and watched through the window for the seven minutes it took Tracy to die. "If she had started to cry I would have taken her out of there," he said.

During the trial Latimer said that surgery performed on Tracy a year before her death had transformed her into a victim in constant agony. "With the combination of a feeding tube, rods in her back, the leg cut and flopping around and bedsores, how can people say she was a happy little girl?" Latimer said.

### WORLD IN BRIEF

## Upper-caste Hindus massacre villagers

LAKSHMANPUR: Hundreds of upper-caste Hindus slaughtered at least 64 people in an overnight attack in this east Indian village of low-caste farmers, 75 miles from Patna, the Bihar state capital. All the victims, nineteen of them teenagers and four aged under five, were low-caste Hindus.

Police blamed the Ranbir Sena, an illegal private militia composed mostly of upper-caste landowners. The local police chief said about 300 armed men entered homes at night and methodically shot and stabbed their victims for two hours. (AP)

### Blast kills Russian miners

MOSCOW: At least 60 Russian miners out of more than 100 under ground were killed in an explosion at Zyrjanovskaya coalmine in Novokuznetsk, Western Siberia. (Robin Lodge writes). Rescuers were still bringing bodies to the surface 18 hours after the blast, which left six miners suffering serious burns.

### Gaddafi thanked by Chirac

PARIS: President Chirac of France has called for improved relations between France and Libya (Ben Macintyre writes). In a personal message, M Chirac also thanked Colonel Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, for Tripoli's help in the investigation of the terrorist bombing of a French airliner in 1989.

### Giuliani's unwanted publicity



NEW YORK: A judge here has rejected an attempt by Rudolph Giuliani, the Mayor, right, to ban advertisements poking fun at him, with the tart comment: "Who would think that the Mayor would object to more publicity?" (James Bone writes). Mr Giuliani had gone to court to fight advertisements placed by *New York* magazine because they took his name in vain. The ads described the glossy as "possibly the only good thing in New York Rudy hasn't taken credit for".

### 'Illegal marriage' couple shot

PESHAWAR: A woman who married her son-in-law was shot dead by family members after tribal clerics in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province ruled the marriage contravened Islamic law. Her son-in-law, whom she had married four years ago, was also executed. They had two children. (AP)

### Mubarak sons end libel case

CAIRO: Two sons of President Mubarak of Egypt dropped a libel action against six journalists after a new apology — leading *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, the Arab daily newspaper, to reopen its office here. The journalists had appealed after being found guilty over a promotion for an ultimately unpublished article. (AP)

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World Cup seedings, page 48

Relief in...  
as Britain...  
veto on



## Dhaka signs pact with rebel tribes to end bush war

FROM AHMED FAZI  
IN DHAKA

THE Bangladesh authorities and the Chakma rebels signed a peace accord yesterday, closing a bloody chapter in a two-decade-old campaign for a tribal homeland in the country's southeastern hills.

The landmark agreement was reached after seven

rounds of talks between government representatives and the Shanti Bahini tribal guerrillas over the past year. J. B. Larma, the former guerrilla commander who led the protracted negotiations with the Government, signed the accord for the rebels.

Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister, who watched the signing ceremony along with

her Cabinet colleagues and senior army generals, said the accord was intended to restore peace on the lush Chittagong Hill Tracts after an on-off bush war that had left 10,000 people, mostly civilians, dead.

The accord provides for a 22-member regional council headed by a tribal leader with sweeping autonomy to administer the 5,000 square miles of

hills rising from the Bay of Bengal and bordering eastern India and Burma. Earlier, tribal rebels scaled down their demand for independence.

The armed campaign for a separate homeland for a half a million minority tribe dominated by ethnic Buddhist Chakmas had meant keeping about 20,000 regular soldiers, paramilitary troops and

armed police in the area. Thousands of tribal families had fled the border to escape the fighting.

The insurgency was sparked off by a decision of a former military regime to settle Bengali Muslims in the hills under state patronage in the 1970s. Ordinary tribes complained of being swamped by the influx of people from

the plains. Rebel tribesmen armed with both automatic guns and traditional spears are to surrender their weapons under an amnesty.

The Government will in return pull back the army from suspected guerrilla hideouts. The Government also agreed to frame laws banning the sale of tribal land to non-tribal individuals.

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The Missions to Seamen  
St Michael's Patriarchal Royal  
College Hall, London EC4B 2EP  
Freepost, London EC4B 4EP

Inventory of polluted sites since 1994. The designers of the stadium, which was built in 31 months at a cost of £250 million, say that elaborate measures are in place to prevent pollution seeping to the surface, including plastic sheeting and a thick layer of concrete below the soil. M Bonnemains said that such precau-

## World Cup pitched into green row

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

A ROW has broken out at the new World Cup football stadium outside Paris amid claims that underground pollution at the site is turning the pitch yellow.

The Stade de France, where next year's World Cup final will be played on July 12, is built on the site of a former gasworks and French environmental groups allege that the "jaundice" affecting the newly laid grass is the result of inadequate anti-pollution measures.

The dispute, erupting just before tomorrow's World Cup draw in Marseilles, has embarrassed the stadium authorities, who insist that the odd colour in parts of the new pitch is a minor and temporary problem. "The grass might be slightly less beautiful than usual but that is because it has just been treated. It is absolutely not the result of pollution," Stéphanie Husson, a stadium official, said.

Environmentalists, however, say that groundwater beneath the pitch is saturated with hydrocarbons and other toxic chemical waste left by the former

gasworks. "The yellowing is an indicator of the pollution," Jacky Bonnemains, head of the environmental pressure group Robin des Bois, said this week.

"The grass is growing very badly as a direct result of the underground contamination, which was just covered up." He said that the area has been on a national

tions were simply evidence that the architects were afraid of the effects of gas pollution.

The pitch first began developing yellow areas last month. Jean-Pierre Leboucher, consultant lawn engineer for the Stade de France, put the problem down to sanding and about 30 square yards were "patched" with new turf, producing an effect which the newspaper *Le Parisien* compared the skin disease alopecia. M Leboucher said that the condition would clear up quickly, but the pitch remains distinctly off-colour. The weekly *Journal du Dimanche* reported that gardeners believed this was due to "mismanaged grass-cutting".

Ecologists say that a serious flood, causing the polluted groundwater to rise, could damage the grass and might even affect players or spectators in hot conditions. M Bonnemains said that the level of pollution was known before construction started.

World Cup seedings, page 48

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# Better off without him

Nicole Contos was left at the altar when her fiancé bolted to Tahiti. Athena Malpas, who was an English guest at the extravagant bridal shower, thinks Nicole had a lucky escape

The unfortunate plight of Nicole Contos, who was left standing alone at the altar, has, for reasons beyond me, snowballed into a full media event in New York. In no time at all, this obscure GAP (Greek American Princess) has gone from being a kindergarten teacher to publicly performing her own personal Greek tragedy.

The story has been covered by CBS, ABC, NBC, CNN and Fox TV; she has appeared twice on the cover of the *New York Daily News*; she has turned down the Sally Jesse Raphael Show but is holding out for Oprah; Ru Paul has

become a big supporter with his slogan "Yo, go Nicole go"; the controversial and outspoken Howard Stern quipped less sympathetically, "Hey, you can't blame the guy, she needs implants."

Barbara Walters seems unconvinced. David Letterman has yet to comment. Book deals and movie rights are apparently being negotiated. Here in the UK, the story has managed to find its way into the broadsheets and tabloids, and was covered by radio and television.

Once upon a time, a Greek wedding was a simple affair; an occasion for close friends and family to celebrate the joining together of two young people. A proposal would be followed by a traditional engagement service blessed by a priest, and simple gold bands would be exchanged. Engraved in each band would be the names of the betrothed. These rings were worn on the left hand until the wedding, when they would be transferred to the right hand.

Weddings are now like Christmas, no longer sacred. No more are they private

events shared with those nearest and dearest, but with everybody and anybody — and if you are deemed interesting enough, you can invite the readers of *Hello!* and *OK!* to share your special day as well.

Once the engagement is announced you are on the matrimonial conveyer belt, and there are now wedding consultants to help you to spend, spend, spend while you are on the way. Even before they exchange vows, the bride and groom will have held engagement parties, bridal showers, stag nights, hen parties and rehearsal dinners.

It is difficult to understand why Nicole got caught up in this media circus. After all the lengthy preparations and warm-up celebrations, followed by the shock of the groom fleeing on honeymoon by himself, one would have thought that she would take some time off to get over it. She was admired and applauded for going on with the reception regardless, and being the first to dance to *Will Survive*.

After such an heroic performance, a rather dignified Garboesque "I want to be alone" response to any media interest was expected. But the show appears to have gone on with a remarkable twist to the plot that has left people in her circle feeling uncomfortable.

During a recent visit to New York, I had the pleasure of attending Nicole's bridal shower. I cannot claim to be more than a passing acquaintance, but a mutual friend thought it would be nice for the bride-to-be to meet someone from London who would be able to take Nicole under her wing when she moved to England after the nuptials. I

plauded for going on with the reception regardless, and being the first to dance to *Will Survive*.

Despite this feast I was the only one happily spreading cream and jam on my scones. The women seated at my table seemed to subscribe to the philosophy that you can never be too rich or too thin; their food remained untouched. They were all impeccably groomed.

I noticed there was a lot of grey, grey being this year's fashionable colour, and Hermès Kelly bags appeared to be *de rigueur*. Their faces were more Jackie than Jackie's expressionless and cold. They wore the official and superficial smiles more commonly associated with a senator's wife enduring a fundraising dinner. Girlish joy and spontaneity were notably scarce.

I cannot say I found myself in overwhelmingly warm and friendly company. Mind you, I don't think I did my best to endear myself to them. "You're from London?" I was asked. "Yes," I replied popping a sandwich into my mouth. "You must have been devastated when Diana died?" Eyes looked at me with deepest sympathy. "Well, no actually. Frankly after the mass hysteria that gripped Britain, I couldn't have been more relieved when they finally laid her to rest and we got back to normal life."

All I heard was the shocked chink of cup against saucer and my gaze was met with silence and horrified stares. "Well, we loved her," said my neighbour recovering. "She was like our Princess." The message was very clear — we appreciated her, even if you didn't. "I can still remember the way she looked at Charles on her wedding day — she was like a fairytale."

"Well, yes it certainly was that — a fairytale," I conceded. Thankfully, the waiter arrived to offer me another cup of tea. I was tempted to ask for a large vodka tonic, but resisted. Instead I excused myself, locked myself in the ladies and smoked an illicit cigarette practically in one breath.

When I emerged from indulging my politically incorrect habit, the bride-to-be had started opening her large pile of gifts, including turquoise boxes from Tiffany and green boxes from the exclusive kitchenware shop, Williams-Sonoma. I noticed that she seemed to be receiving two of everything. I asked if her wedding consultant had made a mistake. "Oh no," I was told. "She's ordered two of everything. One set for her apartment in New York and the other for her new home in England." "Where is

she going to live?" I inquired. "On the Wentworth Estate," her friend and bridesmaid-to-be answered proudly. I obviously failed to give the right reaction. "Do you know the Wentworth Estate?" She pronounced it Went Worth. Again I looked blank. "It's supposed to be really beautiful, set on a golf course, and Fergie lives there." At that point, rather than risk alienating myself further by passing comment

on that particular fairy princess, I excused myself for another nicotine fix.

In retrospect, Nicole, I certainly hope my cynicism about fairytale weddings and princesses did not cast an evil spell over what was to be your special day.

On the other hand, perhaps I brought you good luck. Once your busy schedule has died down, maybe you'll find time to come to London. I'd love to

invite you to a proper English tea, served in a mug, possibly along with a packet of Jaffa Cakes and tell you how you have been saved from a life of boredom.

I mean, what twenty-something girl in her right mind would want to swap the excitement of Manhattan for suburban Wentworth, Surrey. Besides, in Manhattan you get a much better class of neighbour.

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## Miracle cure? Maybe

Anjana Ahuja  
on alternative treatments

ASHLEY FALLON has a life quite unlike those of most five-year-old girls. She has suffered from eczema since she was three months old, she scratches herself until she bleeds and she needs an army of steroid creams, coal tar bandages and pills just to get to sleep each night. Ashley's father left the family home recently, and a turbulent home life is thought to make matters worse.

Her mother, Michelle, complains that Ashley is "prescribed the same things over and over again". Not surprisingly, she is losing faith with conventional treatments. In desperation, the Fallons, from North London, have turned to homoeopathy, which works on the principle that a substance that causes illness can cure when administered in very low quantities.

Ashley is featured in *Natural Born Healers* (Channel 4, tomorrow, 8pm), a series of documentaries on alternative therapies. Each programme examines the effects of a treatment, such as homoeopathy, on one individual over three months. Refreshingly, the series does not show alternative therapists as miracle-workers. Instead, it explores the relationship between orthodox and complementary medicine, which involves sceptical GPs who must juggle their shrinking budgets wisely, alternative therapists who are under pressure to produce immediate results (and rarely do) and desperate patients willing to try anything.

WITHIN three weeks of treatment at the Royal London Homoeopathic Hospital, Ashley was happier and the scratching had died down. It was, Mrs Fallon, believes, her daughter's longest remission in five years.

However, Dr Cornel Fleming, the family's GP, who describes Ashley's condition as very bad, does not believe that homoeopathy can claim the credit. He says: "The kind of dilutions they use are ridiculous. It's the equivalent of dropping an aspirin in the Boulder Dam, and giving water to someone to drink to cure a headache." Ashley's improvement, he says, is because eczema wakes and wakes, and the condition was lying low at the time of treatment. He also thinks positive thinking helped. "It's a sympathetic magic," he says.

His suspicions were confirmed when the eczema flared up again soon afterwards.

Nigella Lawson is away.



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# 'I do the washing-up'

Roger Scruton has views that put him at odds with fellow philosophers. Interview by Jason Cowley

**I**t is hard not to have an opinion about Roger Scruton. From the 30-acre farm in Wiltshire he shares with his young wife, Sophie, 28 years his junior, the flame-haired Scruton launches missiles of disgust against what he sees as the ills of modernity. Single mothers, homosexuals, socialists, feminists, television, popular culture: all find a place in his ministry of contempt.

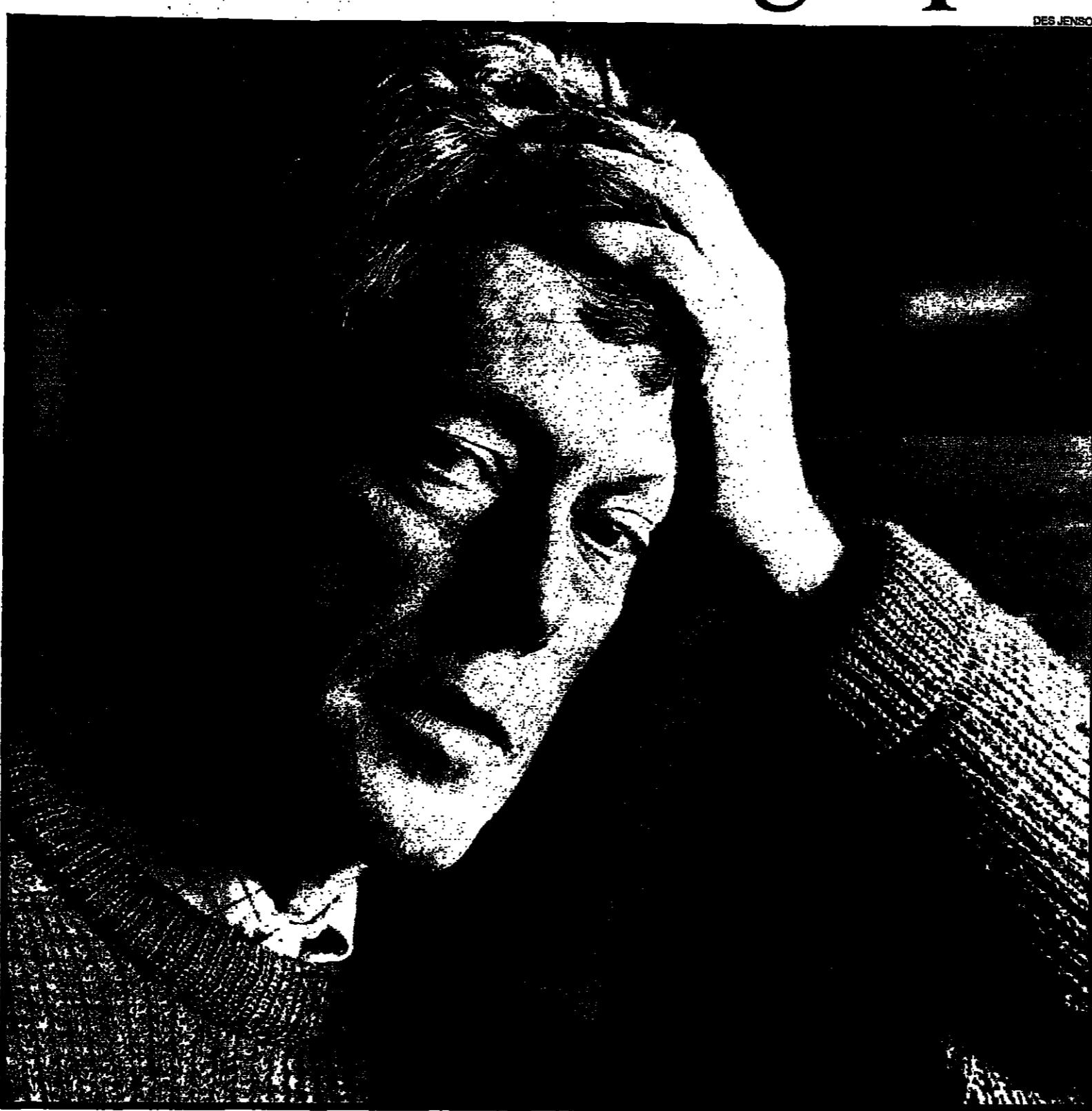
There is considerable humour in Scruton's unashamed fogeyism and reactionary zeal, but others don't always see it that way: he is widely ridiculed and traduced. The writer Ted Honderich calls him the "unthinking man's thinking man"; John Haldane, a friend and fellow philosopher, comments on his "juvenile desire to infuriate", while others suggest that he holds views that would not disappoint the most rancid London cabbie. And many have never forgotten his support of Enoch Powell, or his decision in the mid-1980s, as editor of the right-wing *Salisbury Review*, to publish an essay by Ray Honeyford lamenting the orthodoxy of multiculturalism.

Yet there is another, more interesting side that demands attention: he is a philosopher of remarkable range and seriousness. His new book, *The Aesthetics of Music*, is that rare thing: a work of scholarship that mounts a case for the moral significance of music, locating it as a character-forming discipline, and the decline of musical taste as a decline in morals. The work displays all his virtues as a writer: the stylistic virtuosity, the courageous grappling with fundamental questions, the multi-disciplinary learning, the rhetorical flair.

His range and desire to address the ordinary, as well as specialist, reader is important; for many academic philosophers — dry, technical and mired in minutiae — can appear to speak only to themselves. But Scruton has the nerve to be different, the talent to take risks and the courage to rail against received opinion — that, for instance, the abstract nature of music defies meaning.

We meet in the small, untidy two-room flat he sublets from Alan Clark in Albany, Piccadilly, where Scruton, crouched over a hotplate, is frying sausages.

"I have always liked domestic work," he says, striding



"I came back to Cambridge determined to reanimate a political outlook, which involved protecting and preserving things, not destroying them."

across the room. Tall, lean and athletic, he looks younger than his 53 years. He is handsomely dishevelled. His skin is drawn so tightly across his pale face that you could strike a match on his cheekbones.

Two years ago, a newspaper profiled his second wife, Sophie, as "a widow with two keeping house while Scruton worked in his study." But, Scruton explains, "it is quite the opposite. I do the cooking, the washing-up and all that, and she works in her study." His expression remains sternly unsmiling. "I'm serious. It's a complete reversal of roles." As if to prove his point, he hands me a plate of sausages, cucumber and warm pitta bread, garnished with an excellent apple chutney — he proudly

claims to have made himself.

He met Sophie (née Jeffreys), half-sister to the Tory peer Lord Jeffreys, his second wife, while riding with the Beauvoir Hunt. Scruton fell off his horse and she stopped to help him. "Sophie has very courteous, old-fashioned manners," he says, dreamily. They married in December last year.

There was an immediate intimacy between them, but their difference in age was a problem. Scruton says: "We are both very romantic people so it took a long time before anything happened. She shares many of my interests, although she is not musical. She reads, but not philosophy. We got to know each other quickly, and realised that despite the age gap, which we

discussed many, many times before making a move in any direction, that we were made for each other. I feel that very strongly. I do hope that we shall have children, and that I will cope as an older father."

**R**oger Scruton grew up in relative poverty in High Wycombe, son of a Labour-supporting primary school teacher. His parents had no car and could scarcely afford to go on holiday. He cryptically wrote about his boyhood and his late father in a little-read novel, *Francesco*. The narrative is refracted through the experiences of an aspirant provincial boy, Colin, who becomes obsessed with the daughter of the local aristocrat. But Colin, through a quirk of birth, is shut out from the world of upper-class manners he longs to emulate. Yet he retains a romantic attachment to the notion of an older, more patrician England that his father despises.

"There is a lot of my father in that book," Scruton agrees. "He never went very far in life because he never had any real qualifications. My mother, by contrast, was lower middle-class and suburban: there was always class conflict between them of a particularly Lawrentian kind."

Scruton's route out of suburbia was familiar for many of his age and background: grammar school. "I went to a fantastic school, High Wycombe Royal Grammar School, which completely transformed my life. We never had any books at home, yet my school offered me a real education."

He won a science scholarship to Cambridge, but quickly changed to philosophy. After graduating, he taught in France during the student riots of 1968. This was the defining political event of his life. "I found what was happening intellectually disgraceful, and was appalled by the way people were pulling things down, beautiful and carefully made things, and putting nothing in their place. I came back to Cambridge determined to reanimate a political outlook for the modern world, which involved protecting and preserving things, not destroying them."

He was disgusted, too, by the promiscuity and drug culture of the late 1960s — something he experienced through living with a group of "dropout druggies" in Rome. "The house where I stayed was owned by the daughter of a wealthy publisher; she was going through a bad trip and

wanted to move out of her room and into the bathroom. I was happy about this because I needed lodgings. She fell in with some hippies, the Living Theatre, a bunch of anti-Vietnam dropouts from New York. I saw the drug culture thing first-hand, and was sickened by the vaporous boringness of the people."

He concedes, though, that sexual liberation seemed like a good thing. "But as soon as you became seriously involved with someone, and saw the price that you had to pay in terms of jealousy about your partner's past, you realised it wasn't worth it. A relationship clouded by previous ones is unlikely to last."

It was during this period that Scruton met his first wife, Danièle Laffitte. "It's difficult to talk about all that, but it wasn't very happy..." His voice trails away. Does he regret the failure of an institution in which he believes so strongly? "I'm not sure," he says, sighing. "I was deeply troubled by the whole thing for many years afterwards. It was more than 20 years before I could cope with the idea of marrying again."

How serious is Roger Scruton? The feeling persists among his critics that he is not serious at all; that he has squandered the chance to make an original contribution to philosophy by dissipating his talent across a variety of disciplines without committing himself to any. This has led to charges of dilettantism.

"He is a very interesting thinker," says Haldane. "Most philosophers have neither the ambition nor the aptitude to work as he does, in more than a single area. But his contribution to philosophy is not what it might have been given his abilities. He has the gift but not the interest to pursue philosophy into its details. There is the problem, too, of what I call this juvenile aspect of his character; he is overly quick with certain opinions, and presents things in unhelpfully polemical ways. Had the ruling orthodoxy of his day been on the Right, I think we might have found him on the Left."

Last year Scruton retired from academic life, his final post being as a Professor of Philosophy at Boston University. He spends most of his time in Wiltshire, writing, riding to hounds and playing the organ at church. He reveres the ritual and ornamentation of religion, but is unable to make that final Kantian leap into faith. "I have a scientific mind; I can't just

## The new therapy — painting pots

The latest party accessory is a paintbrush, says Katherine Miller

**M**ove over Ann Summers. Girly gatherings are no longer about peep-hole bras, but pots, brushes and paint. Jamie Lee Curtis does it. Demi Moore's children are into it and as viewers of *Friends* already know, it's what every babe with a glamorous hairdo does on Monday evenings. It's even provided the backdrop for a recent episode of *Caroline in the City*.

The painting party, where guests decorate pots in their own design, has arrived in Britain from America, where as many as ten studios are opening each week. Customers choose a ready-made earthenware item, paint it and collect it three days later, after it has been glazed and fired by the studio.

What was begun four years ago as a one-off enterprise by a married couple in Los Angeles is now a flourishing franchise business with an estimated 700 American studios. Known in the States as brush and biscuit shops, they get their name from bisque, an unglazed white porcelain. This autumn, Brush'n Bisque-It, Britain's first pottery pad, was opened in Fulham, West London, by the former fashion executive Chantal d'Orthez.

The daughter of the late Vicomte d'Orthez, head of the eponymous French champagne-producing family, she came across the idea in Miami a year ago. "I'd just had a black and white kitchen fitted and couldn't find any ceramics to match. I walked into a biscuit shop and painted a couple of candlesticks. I had so much fun that I went back the next day for more."

Convinced she was on to a winner, d'Orthez set up her own studio in August. She has already received inquiries from potential franchisees in Paris, and this week signed a deal for some 30 outlets to trade under the Brush'n Bisque-It banner in Australia.

The idea is already gaining a celebrity following over here. Nanette Newman and her grandchildren are regular visitors to d'Orthez's shop. And d'Orthez says her

### Ten more painting studios open in America each week

for broke," says d'Orthez. Painting completed, each little artist leaves with his or her own painted piece, a relief for parents who find themselves at a loss when it comes to providing going-home presents.

Large groups should book in advance, but many individuals simply wander in off the street, curious to see what goes on in the studio that d'Orthez commissioned from Peter Howitt and Clive Ross, the award-winning designers of the set for *Roger Rabbit*.

"I wanted something theatrical and bold, to give people ideas," she explains. "So many people come in here and say 'I haven't painted since O level', but each time they come, their ideas flow and their pieces get bigger."

Running her own show is a big step for d'Orthez, who tired of "the corporate-world bit" after working as head of fashion marketing for Marks & Spencer in South Africa. Above all, she says: "This is a much more satisfying way to earn a living than sending out 25 inter-office memos every time you want a decision."

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# Put the local back into government

Councils may spend more if they deliver more, says John Prescott

Too often in the past two decades, central government seems to be waging war on local government in town halls. When Labour was elected on May 1, we declared it was time to bury the hatchet. Whatever difficulties we faced — financial, social or environmental — we would face them together with local government, regardless of the party in charge in any particular town hall.

Yesterday I announced the Government's proposals for local authority finance in the coming financial year. Overall, we propose that councils in England can spend an extra £1.78 billion on services — a rise of 3.8 per cent.

The last Government's spending plans implied a council tax increase of 7 per cent. By keeping within spending limits, that is the legacy we inherit. But actual council taxes in individual authorities will vary considerably, and we expect authorities to give full weight to what their taxpayers can afford. By providing an extra £835 million funding for education, we will relieve the pressure on councils.

This settlement is a bit more than many people expected. It is good news particularly for schools, schoolchildren and parents, because the help we are giving to education reflects everyone's top priority.

In Government, we face hard choices and finance is one of them. Everyone knows that we

promised to stick to the spending limits set by the last Government for this year and next, for the sake of the economy. But, within that constraint, we have a new and positive agenda. We want local government to thrive and to be reinvigorated. We want local people to become involved, to vote, to take part, to influence — not just to use the services. And we want local government to be accountable and responsive.

I have told councils that they may spend more; this is not to permit them to be irresponsible, but to allow them to be responsive to their voters. I have also said, very clearly, that however much they propose to spend, they must consider whether local taxpayers can afford it. This is not an opportunity to return to the days of spiralling local taxes. The more responsible councils are, the easier it will be to progress to the removal of caps in the next year or so.

This week we will confirm the successful applicants for pilot schemes to try out proposals for obtaining best value in council services. The tired old approach of forcing councils to offer their services to outside contractors has not worked — too much time was spent on bureaucracy and not enough on the real aim, which is providing quality services at a price local taxpayers are willing to pay.

The question which should be at the heart of all government is this: how best can we ensure the quality of life people deserve? We want

## The removal of capping depends on councils behaving responsibly

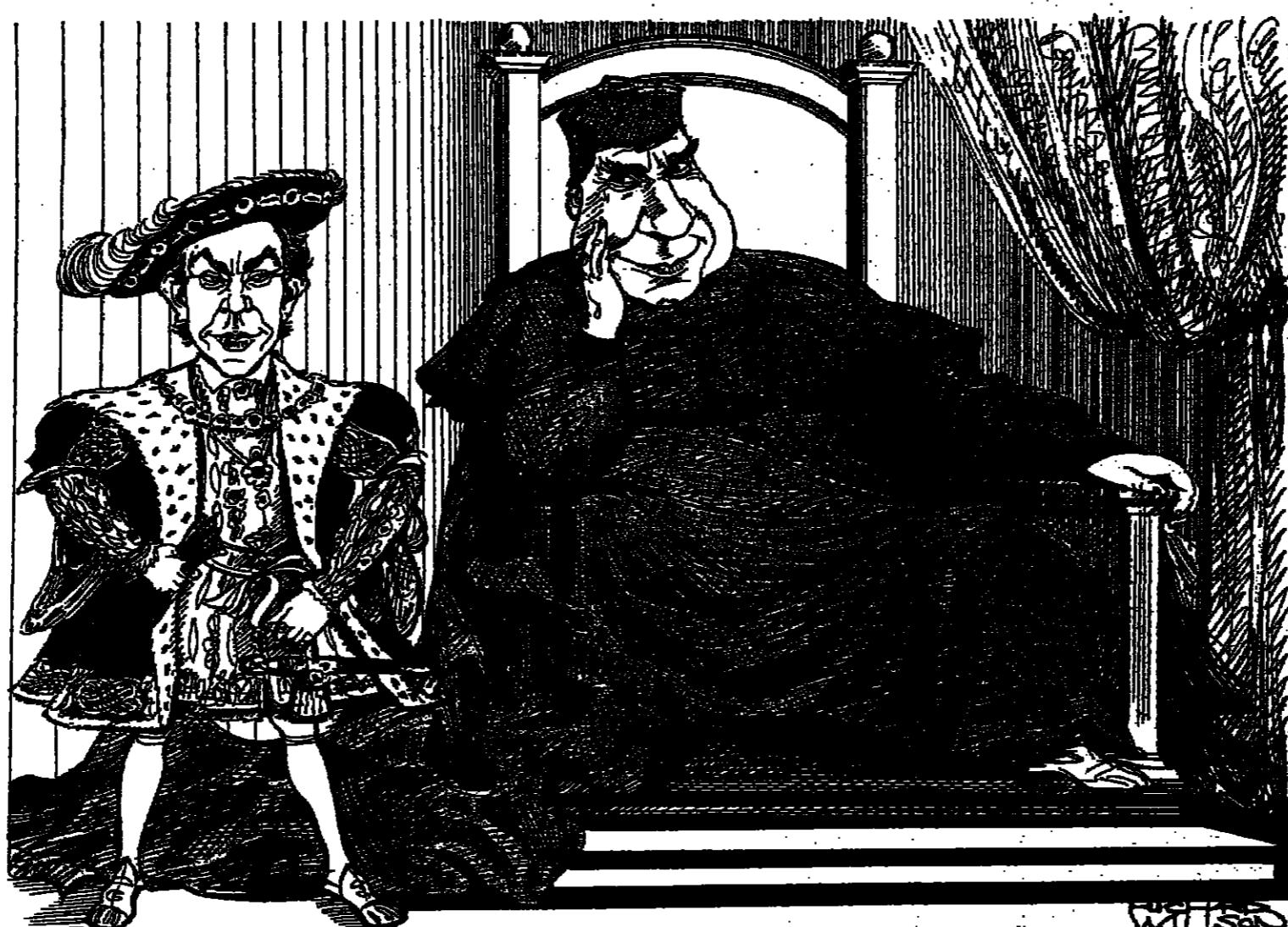
ways of encouraging young people to become involved, as well as tapping in to minority communities.

This month we will start to consult on different aspects of local government and we plan a White Paper next year. The White Paper will also include proposals on local government electoral reform. In parallel, a Home Office group will consider other steps to improve the turnout in elections: for example, we can move the traditional Thursday voting day to one more suited to modern needs? Would it be possible to vote electronically, perhaps even in the local supermarket, without having to visit a polling station?

Over the past seven months, relations between central and local government have improved considerably. We have been working with, and will continue to work with, the Local Government Association: Cabinet colleagues and I have already met them twice to discuss such issues as a better deal for lone parents and Welfare to Work.

We believe in local government. It is an aim of the Labour Party's constitution to empower people to take decisions locally. This year and the next will be tough financially. But we have taken the first steps to reinvigorate local democracy and restore a proper relationship between central and local government.

The author is Deputy Prime Minister.



# Irvine's cardinal error

**The Lord Chancellor may fancy himself a Wolsey — but Brown holds the purse strings**

**A**ny fool can see what is happening. We are back in 1520. The Lord Chancellor thinks he is Cardinal Wolsey. The Prime Minister cuts a dash as the young Henry VIII. A Field of the Cloth of Gold is prepared for Britain's European presidency next year. England is to stand proud with the finest of France, Rome and the Habsburgs, truly a force at the heart of Europe, its court the marvel of the world. Oh, the splendour of it all. And even Dame Hubris is silent, save for the occasional roar of a racing car.

Lord Irvine of Lairg says he was joking when he compared himself to Wolsey. We would have laughed had there not been an aptness in the reference. His lordship is not yet

Archbishop of York, Bishop of Lincoln, Bishop of Winchester and papal legate. But he must be patient. So it was in jest that he told the Reform Club that he admired Wolsey's role in "encompassing politics, religion, the economy and even military affairs".

As for his liking for the disreputable Star Chamber Court, we shall treat it as passing wit.

As for his lordship's boasted relationship with his pupil and master, Tony Blair, it is simple truth. He may despise the pettiness of his fellow ministers and mean to use the Great Seal to stop them "feuding". But they are a second-rate bunch. He wants to oversee a constitutional change that is "the most ambitious and wide-ranging in Britain this century". Don't we all? Besides, Lord Irvine is building at public expense a new Hampton Court "au bord de la rivière" at Westminster. Its wallpaper alone cost £60,000. A man's ambitions must be a match for his wallpaper.

Lord Irvine is clearly deaf to the fate of his illustrious predecessor. Yet

there is another Chancellor at the court of King Tony. Gordon Brown may lack the glamour of a Wolsey, not to mention the wallpaper of an Irvine, but he overreaches them both in power.

Mr Brown has no Great Seal but

he has the Great Budget. Whatever Lord Irvine thinks he is doing, Mr Brown actually does. Whatever Lord Irvine proposes, Mr Brown disposes. Lord Irvine may sit on a thousand committees, but his seat is stuffed with wool. Mr Brown's seat is stuffed with cash.

With characteristic modesty, Lord

Irvine pointed out that four of his predecessors were created saints. He went on to discuss his forthcoming

legal aid reforms. After years of Treasury complaints about the runaway legal aid budget, the Lord Chancellor's Department has finally cracked. It is about to abandon civil legal aid in favour of "no win, no fee" agreements. Civil aid has been a lawyer's sinecure to rank with the most luxuriant of monastic houses. Mr Brown has had enough. He is dissolving it. He wants the money, and Lord Irvine's fat friars are out on their butts, to earn their bread in the woods and fields.

All the Lord Chancellor's saintliness, all his Committees and Seals, his Woolstocks, wands, wigs, wallpaper, silk and ermine will not save his friends. An entire profession, that of civil law, is being transformed by executive fiat from offering impartial advice for a fee to being an entrepreneurial business. The incentive to profit will not be the quality of legal advice but the wealth of the opposing litigant or his insurer. To save the Treasury money, the cost of law will soar.

The reason is simply that the Lord Chancellor's Department has not devised a way of rationing legal aid in civil cases. The Treasury is chucking out a most important welfare state principle, that of helping the poor to justice, with the bathwater of uncontrolled spending.

Slowly the character of the new Government is emerging from the past six months' presentational fog. Its instinct to centralism, above all its concentration of power on Nos 10 and 11 Downing Street, is identical to that of the last Government. Lord Irvine may dream of recovering a role long ceded by his department to others. He may inveigh against feuding departments and seek devolution. He may long for a role at a place that he variously calls the "cusp", the "interface" and the "chief conduit" of government. But these are dreams of grandeur, the fantasies of a committee man, not of a potent politician. He may be a friend of power but he is essentially an outsider, Elton's "attendant prince, one that will do to swell a progress, start a scene or two".

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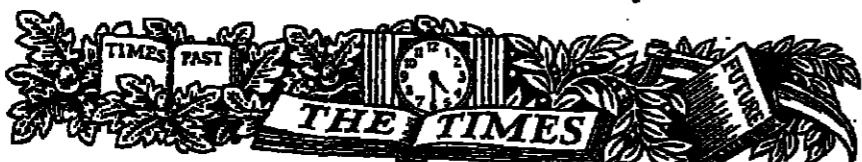
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## IN A CLOUD

Where historic freedoms for press and people are threatened

**A** weakness common among persons of strong intellect and wide interests is a conviction that because they are right about many things, they are right about everything. The Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, both understands many areas of public life and has refreshing ideas about them. He does not, however, understand the dangers in statutory control of the press.

On the evidence of his own words, he has not understood why and how a clause of the Human Rights Bill now before Parliament could constrict both the freedom of the press in this country and the avenues of redress against abuses of that freedom which are now widely and freely open to all. Because he appears not even to recognise that a problem exists, he has resisted amendments to the Bill that could diminish that risk.

The Prime Minister and other members of the Government do understand. They recognise that newspapers are privately owned institutions which fulfil a historic role as a free watchdog over the public interest. They are equally clear about their purpose in incorporating the European Convention on Human Rights, which is to make it easier for British citizens to seek legal redress in this country's courts against abuses of power by the State and the public bodies which act in its name. Lord Irvine, by contrast, so clear about so many things, is here in a cloud.

The heart of the problem is the conflict in the Convention between Article 10, which with various qualifications lays down the right "to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority", and Article 8, which sets out "the right to respect for privacy". When there is conflict between these ideals, who decides? If the courts make the decisions, the effect of incorporation will be — contrary to the Government's reiterated intention — to introduce a law of privacy and impede the investigation of abuses of power.

Until recently, the Cabinet has been convinced, on Lord Irvine's advice, that this could not be the case because the Bill had no bearing on private bodies such as the media. In this respect the critical section of the Bill is Clause 6, which makes it "unlawful for a public authority to act in a way which is incompatible with one or more of the Convention rights".

This wording already gives cause for concern. The phrase "one or more" could invite a court judgment based on only one of the rights laid down in the Convention. That could free a judge of the requirement, for example, to strike a balance between freedom of information and the right to privacy. We accept that this is not the intention of Lord Irvine, who insists that the courts will be required to give freedom of expression "its due high value". But the Government has yet to accept Lord Simon of Glaisdale's amendment removing this ambiguity. It should do so.

There is even greater ambiguity about whether a "public authority" is restricted to institutions with clear statutory functions, such as government bureaucracies and the courts themselves, or whether it spreads wider. As drafted, the list is inclusive and embraces "any person certain of whose functions are of a public nature". When he introduced the Bill last month, Lord Irvine took the view that this did not cover either newspapers or the Press Complaints Commission (PCC). This independent body, currently chaired by Lord Wakeham and set up and funded by newspapers, oversees the self-regulation of the press and takes up complaints from the public.

The Lord Chancellor has now changed his mind and affirmed in the House of Lords that "the press might well be held to be a function of a public nature" within the meaning of the Act. PCC rulings would thus be open to court challenge, and newspapers would be subject to interim injunctions, on privacy grounds, that could delay publication for years. These would offer the powerful and those who would abuse their power many new and wide opportunities to impede investigative journalism.

Although Lord Irvine has changed his mind, he is currently not disposed to alter the Bill. He dismisses as of little consequence

the argument that this would introduce a privacy law by the back door. He argues that a judge-made law of privacy is developing regardless of incorporation. That may be so. But it is no ground for framing such a law, and speeding its growth, as an unintended by-product of this legislation. He is unsympathetic to Lord Wakeham's argument that to bring the PCC within the scope of the Bill would harm the interests of ordinary people. He claims that the press should welcome the "good news" as an incentive to "strengthen" its system of self-regulation — including empowering the PCC to impose fines.

This is the language of Orwell. This good news is bad news. Fines and other so-called strengthenings, which include proposals of a new PCC that excluded press representatives, would be weakenings. They would destroy the combination of practicality and consensus that are the current system's strength. The PCC's official status would then, Lord Irvine claims, make the courts less inclined to intervene. Since they would not otherwise have had the power to do so, this is a logical fallacy; and it betrays a deep misunderstanding of the point of self-regulation and the way in which it works.

For most people, going to law is so ruinously expensive that it is out of the question. For them, the Press Complaints Commission is the only practical avenue to obtain satisfaction when they feel that a newspaper has intruded on their privacy, published an untruth or been unfair and has failed to respond to their complaints. The PCC, a mixed committee of editors and laymen, has no legal powers and can impose no fines. It is less a regulator than a conciliator. The newspapers which subscribe to it bind themselves to respect a PCC ruling that they have broken the industry's voluntary code of practice, to make amends by printing its judgment, apologising, or publishing corrections or balancing articles.

This system of redress works because it is voluntary. Lord Irvine is too seasoned a lawyer to believe that newspapers will readily concede that they have been wrong if it does not open them up to subsequent court cases or financial penalties. They would be far more likely to tell complainants to take them to court. The rich might well do so; the rest could not. The proposed "no win, no fee" system would be little help, because few cases, above all of intrusions into privacy, are so clear-cut that they would stand a sufficient prospect of winning their case.

**T**here is still time for Tony Blair and Chris Smith, the Secretary for Culture, Media and Sport, to provide a remedy. The Cabinet is now aware of the unintended consequences of this Bill. Its members should listen to Lord Wakeham, whose concern is the same as theirs — to help the people of this country to protect their rights as laid down by the Convention — and build in the necessary safeguards. Statements intended to guide the courts as to Parliament's intentions, however strong and even if uttered by the Prime Minister, will be helpful, but not sufficient. Judges may draw on what has been said in Parliament when interpreting the law, but they are not obliged to do so.

The one safe course is to exclude the PCC and the media from the purview of the Act. The Government should then explicitly include an affirmation of the public interest in freedom of information in the Freedom of Information Bill to be published next year. Lord Irvine may well be right that these two small safeguards will not impede the development of a judge-made privacy law, building on existing laws of confidence, protection from harassment and trespass. But this would be an evolutionary process which Parliament could and should watch, as will the Press.

Even if it is amended in this way, the Human Rights Bill will shift the balance between Parliament and the courts, to an extent that may take some years to become evident. That is all the more reason to act decisively to prevent it from restricting, right from the start and as if by accident, freedoms that have for centuries distinguished this country in the world.

## THE ROBINSON PLAN

Less pain for some savers, pain and irritation for others

Labour no longer taxes the rich simply for fun or from envy. But under today's New Austerity, the well-off can no longer expect to keep tax breaks that have little rational justification. Yesterday they discovered that their tax-free savings were to be capped in the interests of persuading poorer people to invest. Their Peps may squeak, but the existing regime is hard to defend.

Nearly half the adult population has no savings at all. Yet today's workers will not be able to rely on the welfare state to underwrite their old age. People on low incomes have so far been deterred from using tax-free saving schemes such as Peps and Tesses because they seemed too complicated, too risky or too rigid. Peps, which have to be invested in shares, are not suitable for those who can only spare the odd £10 at a time. Tesses, which are interest-bearing accounts, tie the saver's money up for five years. Isas, by contrast, can be very simple: up to £1,000 a year can be put in an interest-bearing account, with none of the risks that stock market investment carries. A further £4,000 can be invested in shares or bonds. They will also be flexible: since the money can be taken out at any time.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

### Search for fairness through a national minimum wage

From Mr John Healey, MP for Wentworth (Labour)

Sir, While unions have been in the forefront of arguments for a minimum wage for many years, the new legislation is not about the interests of trade unions. Only one in ten of those earning less than £4 an hour is in a union and the vast majority of those who will gain from a minimum wage are not trade union members.

So much for your statement (leading article, November 28) that the national minimum wage rate Bill reflects the Prime Minister and his team as "the slaves of some defunct trade unionist".

You also raise concerns about possible impact on jobs by citing DTI estimates that 1.8 million jobs may be lost under a minimum wage. That figure, prepared for the previous Government, assumes that half of all those employed in the UK would maintain their present differential with the lowest-paid workers and that the only adjustment employers would make to a minimum wage is to cut jobs. Unsurprisingly, this wild estimate has been very widely dismissed, including by the CBI.

While the economic cycles in most other European Union states are out of sync with Britain's, as at present, you could more usefully have examined the US — which is, after all, the model that many who might oppose a minimum wage eye with envy and wish to emulate — where unemployment last month was 4.7 per cent. The US minimum wage is \$3.15 (£3.49

at the purchasing power parity exchange rate).

Yours faithfully,  
JOHN HEALEY,  
House of Commons.  
November 28.

From Mr H. F. Harte

Sir, Why does the Government want to introduce legal constraints upon voluntarily agreed contracts of employment? If the prospective employer doesn't believe that he will be better off if he accepts the job, he doesn't have to accept it. If he does believe that he will be better off, then why should the Government stop him?

If it is right that everyone deserves at least a minimum amount of money to live on, whether they can find a job that will provide it or not, then taxation must be used to fund a benefits system that will achieve this without the positive disincentives to work associated with the present system.

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## NEWS

## Tax shock for middle-income savers

Hundreds of thousands of people who have accumulated more than £50,000 in popular savings schemes could have to pay more tax after the confirmation that Peps and Tessas are to be scrapped.

In its first open threat to middle-income earners, the Government said that its new individual savings accounts (Isas) would restrict tax-free investments for the better-off to finance incentives for lower-paid savers. Page 1

## Opera report dismisses Covent Garden

Mary Allen, the chief executive of the Royal Opera House, was hurt and dismayed by a parliamentary report into its management and funding which was circulated to the principle figures. The report, produced by a committee headed by Gerald Kaufman, will be published today. Page 1

## Council tax rises

Council taxes are expected to rise by up to 10 per cent next year under a new spending package for town halls unveiled by John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister. Page 1

## Payments frozen

The Government fuelled the row over lone-parent benefits by announcing a freeze on payments for existing single parents. More than 120 Labour MPs are already threatening to rebel over plans to cut payments. Page 17

## Illegal detention

A large number of mentally ill patients are illegally detained in hospitals, according to a Court of Appeal judgement. Page 2

## Bottom score

Cambridge University acquired an unwanted addition to its list of academic distinctions when a team from New Hall recorded the lowest score on *University Challenge*. Page 5

## Nazi gold clash

Switzerland clashed with Jewish leaders over claims that it still owes billions of dollars in gold stolen by Nazi Germany. Page 6

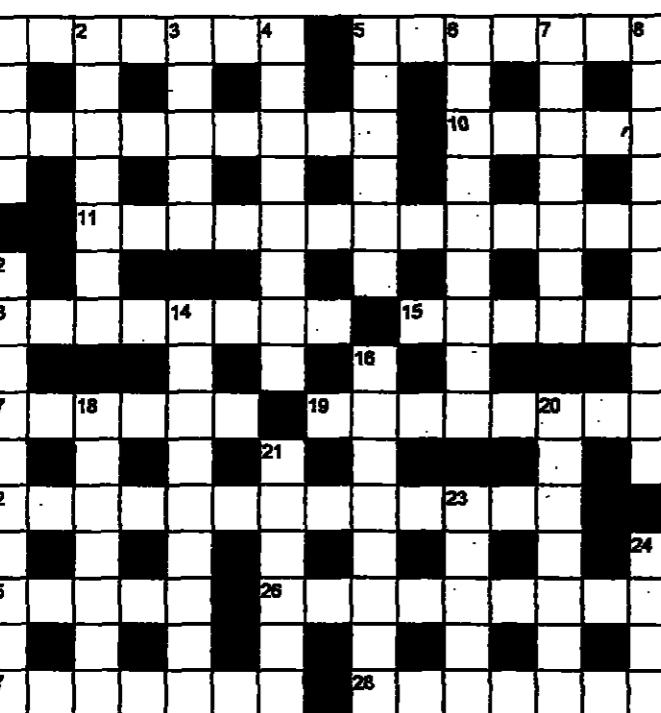
## Spencer evidence

Earl Spencer is almost certain to be forced to give evidence today to finalise the acrimonious divorce from his wife after he agreed a settlement estimated at £2 million. Page 8

## Sad twist to a tragic romance

The true story of a doomed wartime romance between a young Welsh Guardsman and the beautiful Polish girl he met and married in a German prison camp made perfect material for a film. But the tragic ending of *Bride of War* has turned out to have a twist. Instead of dying in the camp the girl lived for another 50 years, unknown to her husband. Page 3

## THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,653



ACROSS  
 1 With monarch coming in, save a selected piece (7).  
 5 Welcoming a drink (7).  
 9 A general on the field, who produces dramatic results? (9).  
 10 Reporter's taken to court for fraud (5).  
 11 A woman's work in male domain – football pitch (9).  
 13 Lightweight about to go mad, seeing German beating the count (8).  
 15 Announced deal with composer (6).  
 17 Make mistake in addition task (6).  
 19 After opening of bar always takes time to produce drink (6).  
 22 Trouble takes with problem pump (5-8).  
 25 Steep embankment originally seen on far side of city (5).  
 26 Like a couple opposed in cult – one said to be converted? (9).  
 Solution to Puzzle No 20,652

DOODAH OBITUARY  
 A G C P R W L I  
 RECITAL OVERSEE  
 T L T U A E O L  
 BRUSHASIDE GRID  
 O D E S A A L  
 AVENGER IMPINGE  
 R O E D P L  
 DISCARD ENLARGE  
 A L O F E A M  
 LULU SUCCESSIVE  
 O T H N A A L N  
 HAILEND FAUNISH  
 R I E E C N A  
 OVERRIDE BENGAL

Times Two Crossword, page 48



Still three weeks to go but Epsom Downs, Surrey, woke up yesterday to a Christmas card landscape. More snow is on the way. Page 1

## BUSINESS

**Banking:** National Westminster is to sell the bulk of its NatWest Markets business for £179 million, bringing down the final curtain on attempts by British banks to establish themselves as global players in investment banking. Page 25

**Motor racing:** British American Tobacco has bought the Tyrrell team for an estimated £18 million. A new team named British American Racing International, the accountancy and consulting group, faces a \$4 billion lawsuit over its part in the collapse of a US retailer. Page 45

**Department stores:** Sears has begun the promised auction of its British Shoe Corporation by selling Dolcis to a joint venture headed by Alexon for £1.6 million. Page 25

**Markets:** The FTSE 100 rose 55.8 to 1,977.6. Sterling fell to 105.4 after falling from \$1.6847 to \$1.6821 and DM2.9942 to DM2.9846. Page 28

## Mandela daughter

The youngest daughter of President Mandela was alleged to have joined her mother in torture sessions. Page 15

## President resigns

The President of Pakistan resigned after losing a power struggle with Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister. It took the Pakistani Army to save what is left of a crumbling democracy. Page 16

## Gibraltar surprise

Britain moved to unblock an increasingly bitter impasse with Spain over Gibraltar by making a concession that surprised Nato defence ministers. Page 17

## SPORT

**Football:** England are not among the eight seeds for the World Cup finals, the price of their failure to qualify in 1994. Page 48

**Motor racing:** British American Tobacco has bought the Tyrrell team for an estimated £18 million. A new team named British American Racing International, the accountancy and consulting group, faces a \$4 billion lawsuit over its part in the collapse of a US retailer. Page 45

**Hockey union:** For all the brave words extracted by the England management from a draw and two defeats, they have an intractable problem when they name the XV to play New Zealand. Page 48

**Rugby league:** Only two Super League clubs were found to be profitable and several have been deemed technically insolvent in an independent survey. Page 45

**Markets:** The FTSE 100 rose 55.8 to 1,977.6. Sterling fell to 105.4 after falling from \$1.6847 to \$1.6821 and DM2.9942 to DM2.9846. Page 28

**Pop crackers:** It's that time of year again when otherwise sane record companies put out novelty Christmas singles. So will be *Telebabbles* at No 1? Page 34

**Small wonders:** Can the children's classic *The Borrowers* fight Disney's stranglehold on young cinema-goers? It will all be in the packaging, say the marketing men. Page 35

**Dynamic duo:** Morten Friis and Uffe Søvrey are better known as the Sødru Duo, two percussionists who are bringing their 1.8 tons of kit to the Wigmore Hall. Page 35

**Off-road:** Dramatic measures are being devised for London and in housing developments around the country to deal with the car congestion. Page 37

**Scholmer's misfit:** *Danton's Death* and Woyzeck are mature, confident plays; now David Parr's production at the Gate aims to put *Leonce and Lena* alongside. Page 36

## TOMORROW

## IN THE TIMES

**FILMS:** Geoff Brown sees Sylvester Stallone take a stand in *Copland*

**BOOKS:** Raymond Seitz uncovers Thomas Jefferson's Parisian adventure. Peter Ackroyd hails London's chaotic beauty

**Off-road:** Dramatic measures are being devised for London and in housing developments around the country to deal with the car congestion. Page 37

**Seasonal change:** For secretaries who are unhappy with their jobs, this is the season to start looking around. Page 41

**Geoff Brown sees Sylvester Stallone take a stand in *Copland***

**Seasonal change:** For secretaries who are unhappy with their jobs, this is the season to start looking around. Page 41

**Big Daddy, wrestler:** Malcolm Green, Shetland Islands chief executive; Edgar Cawley, wartime bomber navigator. Page 23

**Minimum wage:** tobacco sponsorship; defence procurement; targeting tax; beef exports; laser pens; defamation law; Zimbabwe land seizure; Southport. Page 21

**Malcolm Green, Shetland Islands chief executive; Edgar Cawley, wartime bomber navigator. Page 23**

**Seasonal change:** For secretaries who are unhappy with their jobs, this is the season to start looking around. Page 41

**The principle of extending the international presence in Bosnia has been accepted. It represents simple common sense. Bosnia today remains a fragile construction which must be defended as much against itself as against the regional appetites of its powerful neighbours. The only hope of ensuring the healing process will be found in long-term therapy applied from the outside** — *Le Soir*, Brussels

**Malcolm Green, Shetland Islands chief executive; Edgar Cawley, wartime bomber navigator. Page 23**

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# Hogg Robinson to beat pensions deadline

By DOMINIC WALSH

HOGG ROBINSON, the travel and financial services group pilloried by the Government earlier this year for its pensions mis-selling compensation record, expects to have cleared all outstanding priority cases by March.

In July the company headed a table of the worst offenders issued by the Government as part of its "naming and shaming" tactic, having settled

only 1 per cent of priority cases. But the company said yesterday that it expects to meet the deadline for settling priority cases for people approaching retirement age.

David Radcliffe, chief executive, said \$4 per cent of priority cases had been completed by October, and the total of 1,900 cases would be settled by March, well ahead of the December 1998 deadline.

The cost of settling cases has increased because of the impact of

advance corporation tax changes and higher annuity costs. However, Neville Bain, chairman, said: "We believe there will be no material financial impact over and above our current provisions for priority cases on the full-year results." Mr Bain declined to reveal the amount involved.

The news came as Hogg Robinson revealed a rise in underlying half-year profits from £12.05 million to £14.53 million on sales up from £699.8 million to £735.8 million.

However, the pre-tax figure shrank from £14.02 million to just £1.9 million after a £12.95 million provision on the sale of the transport division in September. There was also a £400,000 provision for the relocation of its head office.

Financial services, which UK Active Value, holder of 4 per cent of the shares, has been pressuring the company to sell, raised profits 11 per cent to £4.28 million.

Business travel, meanwhile, rose

25 per cent to £1.07 million — a 37 per cent rise at constant exchange rates. Mr Radcliffe said financial services would be retained, although he admitted: "Some elements might not fit longer term."

Mr Radcliffe also said that the group had £65 million at its disposal to fund acquisitions, and a further £15 million to fund a buyback of up to 7.5 per cent of its shares. An interim dividend of 4.07p (3.70p) will be paid on January 20.

PETER TREVOR

## Stagecoach will invest if franchise is extended

By FRASER NELSON

STAGECOACH has offered to spend more than £400 million on new carriages for its South West Trains network if John O'Brien, the franchising director, agrees to extend its franchise for a further seven years.

Brian Souter, chief executive of the transport group, is to tell Mr O'Brien that Stagecoach will make the London Waterloo commuter line the most modern rail franchise in Britain if it is given the chance to keep running it until 2010.

The offer will stand until the next set of rail franchises comes up for tender in four years' time. Mr Souter said: "We run 120 sets of trains, and we're renewing 30 of them already. What we're saying is that we will renew the lot if the franchise were extended. We could do it all in three years if we were to get the green light now."

The new trains would replace its 360-strong slam-door fleet, bought via its Porterbrook leasing company, then hired to South West Trains. Stagecoach has already ordered 30 new trains for £90 million. It has the franchise until 2003.

The offer comes nine months after Stagecoach was fined £1

million for cancelling 2,000 trains, after it made too many drivers redundant. Mr Souter said the company had completely recovered from the problems and has cut the workforce by a further 200, to 3,700, at a cost of about £5 million.

Stagecoach's half-year results yesterday identified South West Trains and Porterbrook leasing companies as the two most profitable parts of the privatised rail network.

It made £7.8 million profit from South West Trains, after a £1 million-a-week subsidy, helped by an overall £73,000 bonus from the franchising director.

Porterbrook, which has just over 100 staff, made a profit of £627 million after taking in £186 million in rent from its 17 rail franchises. This helped overall pre-tax profits to reach £70.5 million (£47 million) for the six months to October 31.

It said the number of timetabled rush-hour rail carriages on the Waterloo line rose 4.9 per cent over the six months, although in practice technical problems saw the company fined £26,000 for running too few carriages.

Some analysts fear that Porterbrook's operating margin will be curbed by regulation. Analysts said that Porterbrook's operating margin of 34 per cent is better than any company in the FTSE 100 index bar National Grid, and is inviting a government crackdown.

Mr Souter said these fears were "completely off the wall", adding: "Porterbrook's contracts are protected under English law." He said the company would seek compensation if the contracts were broken.

The £2 million cost of competing with rival Firstbus in Strathclyde and Fife was blamed for sluggish growth of 1.5 per cent in the bus division. The company has ordered 529 buses for delivery, a third fewer than the number on order last time.

The interim dividend rises a third, to 4p, suggesting a total 12p payout for the full year. This would give Mr Souter £4.06 million in dividends and provide Ann Groat, his sister, with a £3.37 million payment.

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## Videologic deeper in red at half time

By CHRIS AYRES

VIDEOLOGIC, the troubled computer graphics company, yesterday said that first-half pre-tax losses more than doubled in the six months to September 30, from £1.2 million to £2.9 million, while turnover fell 25 per cent, from £7.3 million to £5.4 million.

The company also said that Tony MacLaren, its chief executive, would stand down after 13 years with the group.

Videologic blamed the poor results on its £1.9 million restructuring, which will make the company more dependent on royalties from component and chip design than on product building.

Geoff Shingles, its chairman, said he was confident in the future, and highlighted a £1.3 million investment by NEC, the electronics group, as proof of potential. "The development of 3D graphics reinforces our belief that our technology strategy and partnerships are the correct model for continued success," he said.



Chris Wright, seated, Chrysalis chairman, with Philip McDanell, managing director, at the Heart studios in London

## Character toy firm hopes to double size in year

By CHRIS AYRES

CHARACTER GROUP, the toy company responsible for bringing Spice Girls dolls and Teletubbies keyrings to the shops, yesterday said that it could double in size over the next 12 months.

The company, which has already sold 800,000 Teletubbies keyrings in the run up to Christmas, made the claim as it reported a 29 per cent rise in pre-tax profits for the year to August 31, from £1.6 million to £4.7 million.

Richard King, chairman, said: "We're having a very

good Christmas, we have met all our projections and we're short of merchandise." He said the first shipment of Spice Girls dolls sold out within an hour of reaching the shops, and supply could not meet demand.

"My opinion is that we could make two million and they'd sell out," he said.

Character's sales rose 36 per cent, from £30 million to £41 million, last year. Earnings per share were up 22 per cent, from 12.33p to 15.08p. A total dividend of 4.5p, up from 3.5p,

is due to be paid on January 30.

Mr King said: "The company will certainly double in size within the next two years, possibly this year. We have a very broad range of products — over 3,000 in one of our divisions — and they are in new areas that are expanding very quickly."

The group aimed to grow organically, but was considering opportunities to buy companies involved in character-related goods, he said. It has cash balances of £3.7 million.

## Siebe free of Far East woes



Alen Yurko: Asian sales strong

SHARES in Siebe clawed back much of last month's losses yesterday after the maker of temperature controls said that it is not being affected by turmoil in Far Eastern markets (Fraser Nelson writes).

The company, which exports £200 million of goods to the Far East each year, also assured the City that currency fluctuations would not prevent this year's profits from being "outstanding".

Alen Yurko, chief executive, said: "Our order book in Asia is very strong and we have not

seen any decline in bookings rates yet."

Pre-tax profits rose 16 per cent, to £222 million, in the half year to September 9, even after an £18.3 million reverse from sterling's strength. Earnings per share rose to 27.7p (24p). An interim dividend of 5.4p (4.9p) is due on April 8.

The shares, down to £10.39 last month, rose 35p to £11.63 as analysts lifted their £105 million profit forecast from £91 million to £105 million.

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## Brown urged to spend

GORDON BROWN will today come under fire from a senior Labour peer over his refusal to boost economic growth by increasing public spending (James Landale writes).

Lord Barnett, Chief Secretary to the Treasury in the last Labour Government in the 1970s, will say that unemployment will grow to unacceptable levels unless he loosens the public purse strings.

Last week Mr Brown gave a pessimis-

tic assessment of the economy's future in his pre-Budget statement, forecasting growth dipping to below 3 per cent.

Speaking in a debate on the economy in the Lords today, Lord Barnett will say: "Growth figures are too low. We are going to go to the end of the century with economic growth levels forecast to be well below 3 per cent and I find that too low. The Chancellor should go for higher levels."

## Generation review plea

BUSINESS users, including J Sainsbury, GKN and British Airways, are pressuring for electricity generation to be thrown into the spotlight of a review into power trading (Christine Buckley writes). They called for large generators to be forced to sell more power stations to boost competition.

The call from the Utility Buyers Forum echoes other pleas to the industry regulator, who is drafting

terms for the review ordered by the Government. Generation has been attacked for lacking competition and for payments made to the generators for them to keep power stations available.

The forum wants a fully independent review to concentrate on promoting competition. It said: "Contract prices remain on an upward path due to the dominant influence of a few players in the price-setting generation market."

## BUSINESS ROUNDUP

### Albany Life fined £375,000 by PIA

THE Personal Investment Authority has reprimanded and fined Albany Life £375,000 and ordered it to pay £32,000 costs for failing to meet its first deadline in the pensions mis-selling review. Albany had to settle 90 per cent of its 983 most urgent cases by the end of September. However, delays in getting information from occupational pensions schemes into which mis-selling victims are supposed to be reinstated meant the company had offered compensation to only 80 per cent.

Malcolm Kerr, marketing director, said the company had now reached its target. However, he could not guarantee that it would reach its second target of settling all 2,833 cases by next September.

### Debt deal for Russia

RUSSIA and its Western creditor banks closed a landmark \$32.3 billion (£19 billion) debt deal, marking a further step in the country's financial rehabilitation. "Today we finalised the closing procedure on London Club restructuring," Andrii Kostin, chairman of Vneshekonombank, the state bank, said in London. The deal was signed by 423 banks and financial institutions belonging to the so-called London Club of commercial creditors. Mr Kostin said that the transfer of about \$3 billion would be made as part of interest payments to all creditors.

### Airbus seeks \$500m

THE Government may be asked for a loan of up to £300 million (£303 million) to help to launch an aircraft that would be bigger than the Boeing 747, currently the largest on the market. Airbus Industrie, the pan-European aircraft manufacturer, wants to build the A3XX to be in service in 2003. The aircraft would have the capacity to carry 555 or more people and would also contain innovations such as a gym, a bar or a creche. The total cost of the project is likely to be about \$8 billion.

### Applied breakthrough

APPLIED MATERIALS INC is expected this week to unveil a new system for manufacturing semiconductors that will help the microchip industry to move more quickly to the production of advanced chips using copper. Applied, based in Santa Clara, California, is the largest maker of equipment used to manufacture semiconductors. Analysts said that Applied would announce a core system for making semiconductors called a CVD (chemical vapor deposition) system designed to use copper instead of aluminum to make faster semiconductors.

### Chieftain confident

SHARES in Chieftain, the engineering and construction group, rose from 57.7p to 59p after it said the results to December 31, 1997, were expected to exceed current market estimates by a significant margin. It said that, since the acquisition of the pipework fabrications and erection business of R Blackett Charlton in 1994, the group had been substantially reorganised. It is now focusing on higher margin engineering products and services including industrial pipework, ductwork, and other steel fabrications.

### Leslie Wise hit

SHARES of Leslie Wise fell 5p to 19p after the clothing manufacturer said that profitability for the year to November 30 would be below expectations at the time of its interim statement. Pressure on margins in the second half has been accentuated by the continuing difficult trading conditions on the high street. The company said: "Although the garment division overall has achieved a moderate increase in volume, the pressure applied to margins by the major retail groups has reduced the division's profitability."

### Cabletron shares plunge

SHARES of Cabletron Systems lost 22 per cent of their value after the US provider of networking products and services warned the New York Stock Exchange that earnings would miss the mark for the third straight quarter. Cabletron fell \$6.06 (£3.50) to \$17.12. The company said earnings for its fiscal third quarter ending in November were likely to be between 8 cents to 12 cents a share, well short of consensus estimates of 39 cents a share. It was estimated that revenues would drop to between \$330 million and \$340 million from \$361 million a year ago.

### Copbras joint venture

MINORCO said Copbras, its 73 per cent-held subsidiary, and Albright & Wilson have signed a letter of intent to form a joint venture based in Brazil to supply the growing phosphate markets in Chile and the Mercosur, the trading bloc established by Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay. The venture, owned 50 per cent by each partner, will combine the local market presence and assets of Copbras with the technology and global network of Albright & Wilson to build a technical phosphates plant, with start-up by the end of 1998.

Bank	Basis	Bank	Basis	Bank	Basis
Australia \$	2.58	2.49	2.49	Malta	0.927
Austria Sch	22.01	20.35	20.35	Malta	0.926
Belgian Fr	64.81	59.95	59.95	New Zealand \$	2.91
Canada \$	22.51	22.33	22.33	Norway Kr	12.20
Cyprus Cyp2	0.917	0.917	0.917	Norway Kr	11.95
Denmark Kr	11.95	11.07	11.07	Portugal Esc	37.70
Finland Fmk	8.28	8.28	8.28	S Africa Rd	1.58
France Fr	11.95	11.95	11.95	S Africa Rd	7.92
Germany Dm	3.15	2.91	2.91	Spain Pta	263.70
Greece Dr	454	455	455	Sweden Kr	13.84
Hong Kong \$	13.35	12.23	12.23	Sweden Kr	12.94
Iceland Ikr	1.20	1.11	1.11	Switzerland Fr	2.50
Israel Shek	6.32	5.67	5.67	Turkey Lira	355.14
Italy L	210	208.94	208.94	USA \$	1.785
Japan Yen	226.13	21.60	21.60		

Why does new Labour hate savers? Gordon Brown's £5 billion-a-year tax on pension funds will mainly hit the young, slashing future pensions for millions. Geoffrey Robinson is redressing the balance by attacking older savers in Peps and Tessas.

The young will be allowed to subscribe up to £50,000 over a decade or more into his Individual Savings Account, hoping to build up tax-free savings of perhaps £150,000 plus. But those who have invested £50,000 over ten years in Peps and Tessas will have the return on that saving treated as the wealth of the rich and have its tax privileges removed. Those relying on the income from that £50,000 saving in retirement will have their income slashed.

As it happens, savers who put near the maximum into Peps from the start might now reasonably expect to have savings worth £150,000 or more after charges. Potential ISA savers should presume that the same fate awaits them if they take the Treasury's tax shilling.

If you can manage to put up to £50,000, you are an ordinary saver who deserves encouragement. If you earn a reasonable return, you become, as Mr Robinson put it, "very well-off people" who exploit tax loopholes at the expense of ordinary taxpayers. He may not have noticed that these are the same people.

New Labour was determined

## Robinson gives savers a lemon

to have its own completely different savings scheme. Its absurdly complex ISA proposals show the blinkered zeal of compulsive meddlers who are a soft touch to horned pressure groups such as friendly societies.

There is one welcome novelty. Those on modest incomes can save up to £1,000 a year in secure deposits that yield tax-free income without tying money up for as long as in Tessas. Annual deadlines for tax privileges can persuade people to save more.

But the main reason so many do not save is that they cannot afford to. The only way to change that is to impose cuts in their living standards by law (as in the forthcoming stakeholder pension) or to axe the welfare net.

ISA schemes to attract small savings into deposits will no doubt develop separately, not least because the costs of a hybrid ISA, taking in all the options, would be too high. The same could have been achieved, however, by a dedicated new National Savings scheme or one run by banks and building societies. The extra cost in lost tax could easily have been met by cutting the annual Peps limit. Why be pragmatic, though, when you can have fun wrecking

people's savings plans? In just seven months, the Government must have convinced everyone that they can have no faith in any long-term savings vehicle remaining intact.

More raids will be made on pensions; ISAs are designed for tinkering. Best put the money in the only tax-efficient vehicle that one can rely on top of Government ministers of any party to defend to the last: an offshore family trust like Mr Robinson's.

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people's savings plans? In just seven months, the Government must have convinced everyone that they can have no faith in any long-term savings vehicle remaining intact.

As NatWest rid itself of the vestiges of any aspiration towards investment banking, Chief executive Derek Wanless was even prepared to don verbal sackcloth and admit what a hash NatWest had made of its ambitions in that direction.

### COMMENTARY by our City Editor

He could hardly have done otherwise, given the figures involved.

In its mood of *mea culpa*, the bank decided to confess the extent of its failure rather than fudge how and work on producing a prettier picture for unveiled at the year end. The truth provides a gory illustration of how quick and easy it is to lose vast sums of money in these markets if you couple incompetent management with tricky trading conditions.

As NatWest owned up, a sense of one-upmanship over the chaps at Barclays seemed to be providing some comfort, and even encouragement, during what would otherwise have been an exceedingly painful exercise. So there was much emphasis on the fact that, unlike Barclays, NatWest's sales are at least at a premium to net assets, even if the £179 million price struck some as miserly. Most had also underestimated the scale of the losses

the bank had been cranking up in its putative investment bank under Martin Owen's leadership. Yesterday, NatWest forecast a loss for the year of £210 million before the £270 million cost of restructuring after the sales and the little matter of £77 million that went missing from the derivatives business earlier this year. But, hey, what's £557 million when you're learning your limitations?

Wanless and his chairman, Lord Alexander of Weeton, must now convince the City that the lesson has been learnt and that they now have a clear strategy for NatWest. If, for instance, they cannot reassure customers that they are wedded to the corporate finance division long term, deals will continue to go elsewhere. They have much to prove, for they were theoretically in charge as costs at NatWest Markets soared and supervision slipped under the Owen regime.

Others in the City are still

splashing the cash around, however. Deutsche Morgan Grenfell is paying £50 million for NatWest's global equity derivatives division. Most of that is accounted for by the 100 individuals involved. Figures like that explain why Britain's clearing bankers have decided they don't want to play such dangerous games any more.

### Osborn puts the boot into Sears

For John Osborn, buying the Dolcis business from Sears may have something of the sweet smell of revenge. He was booted out of British Shoe Corporation just as he was

wielding the axe which was so desperately needed to try to bring the straggling operation into line. The turnaround he has effected at Alexon is evidence of what he might have achieved had Sears allowed him a little longer at BSC.

Yet the deal he has constructed with Electra Fleming indicates he certainly has faith in his abilities. If he can pull Dolcis into the shape he wants within two years, he has the option to buy out Electra at twice the price

of their investment: the sort of return of which venture capitalists dream. If the turnaround takes longer, the cost of independence rises to up to £30 million.

Sears must already be dreading the reaction if Osborn should accomplish the two-year transformation. The sale is costing the company £13 million and seeing Dolcis rapidly put to rights would be another indignity in a long line of them. The company sold its Olympus sports chain to Philip Green only to see the business race ahead towards flotation on the back of a booming sportswear market. Sears was left bemoaning its dwindling sales as customers flocked to its former shops.

With bids due in for its Shoe City and Shoe Express chains by the end of this week, Sears must be dreading letting others demonstrate how good those businesses too could be.

### Herculean battle

The battle between Bradford-based Allied Colloids and the American chemicals company, Hercules, is shaping up for a fascinating fight. Yesterday the plain-speaking northerners fired off a set of figures that would have been even more remarkable were there not an aggressive bidder on the scene. Chief executive David Farrar is new enough to the job to have no history, only its prospects. So much easier.

## Bid talks boost shares in troubled Merrydown

By DOMINIC WALSH

MERRYDOWN, the Sussex cidermaker laid low by the slump in sales of Two Dogs alcoholic lemonade, saw its market value soar 15 per cent yesterday after it revealed that it was in bid talks.

Richard Purdey, executive chairman, said: "If an offer is forthcoming that the board feels to be in the best interests of shareholders, it will proceed accordingly." Its shares gained 15p to 65½p.

There was speculation that the company could be in talks with a rival such as Matthew Clark or HP Bulmer, although analysts said Matthew Clark was probably too busy rebuilding its brands after a banting at the hands of the alcopops explosion, and Bulmer said that it was not in talks.

A more likely option would be a larger drinks or brewing group with the muscle to support and distribute the company's cider and Shloer grape juice brands. Analysts cited as a candidate Pernod Ricard, pointing out that it had shown an interest in



Richard Purdey of Merrydown is hoping for a formal offer

Taunton Cider before it was acquired by Matthew Clark in 1995. The French group distributes Two Dogs in Europe.

In case a formal bid fails to materialise, Mr Purdey has an alternative strategy of scaling back the company and reshaping the board under a new non-executive chairman.

Andy Nash, former managing director of Matthew Clark and a former commercial director of Taunton Cider.

Mr Purdey, executive chairman since 1992 and a member of the founding family, would become non-executive deputy chairman. Two other directors, Colin Fitch and Peter

Monro, would retire at the next annual meeting.

The sharp drop in sales of Two Dogs, and the difficult trading conditions that continue to afflict the cider market, contributed to a pre-tax loss of almost £1 million, compared to a profit of £670,000. Turnover in the six months to September 30 slumped by 41 per cent, to £11.45 million. The loss per share is 6.73p compared to earnings of 3.57p and there is no interim dividend.

The company was forced to hand over distribution of Two Dogs to Scottish & Newcastle, but yesterday it said the move had failed to prevent sales "diminishing to a fraction of its former volume", thought to have been £50 million at the height of the alcopops craze last year. Handing distribution to S&N was responsible for most of the exceptional costs of £630,000.

Mr Purdey said changes taken to cut costs meant trading for key brands in the third quarter was ahead of the same period last year.

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City Diary, page 29

## Dorling dips on profits warning

By OUR CITY STAFF

SHARES in Dorling Kindersley fell from 247½p to 22½p after the publishing group said that it expects pre-tax profits for the half year to December 1997 to be lower than the £6.8 million achieved in the first half of last year.

The benefits of a cost-reduction programme, introduced earlier this year and now being stepped up, will begin to flow through in the second half, which is traditionally Dorling Kindersley's stronger trading period, said Peter Kindersley, the chairman, at the company's annual meeting.

Mr Kindersley told shareholders: "The continuing

strength of sterling is having a greater adverse impact on margins on our trading outside the UK — some three quarters of group turnover — than was originally anticipated."

He said that turnover through DKFL, the family learning business, although still growing well, would be below previous expectations.

Dorling Kindersley has appointed two new executive directors, David Houston and Alan Luce. Mr Houston's appointment as group finance director, in succession to Peter Gill, will take effect next year. Mr Luce's appointment is with immediate effect.

## Bodycote to save underwriting fees

By OUR CITY STAFF

BODYCOTE International, the engineering group, expects to save some £1.25 million in underwriting fees through its deeply discounted non-underwritten 900.3 million rights issue.

John Chesworth, managing director, said the 500p-a-share, one-for-four rights issue would fund the £6.7 million acquisition of Hit, the French thermal coatings group. The remainder of the funds would be for further acquisitive moves. He said that the board was looking to complete "several additional acquisition opportunities".

Bodycote is backing the rights issue with a pre-tax profits forecast for the current year of not less than £47 million and a final dividend payment of 6.5p a share. Mr Chesworth said he would be "very surprised" if the rights issue was not supported by its main institutional shareholders, which include Robert Fleming and Prudential Corp, which respectively speak for about 10 per cent and 6 per cent of the shares.

The Hit deal will give Bodycote another good profit stream and follows on from our acquisition of Bruekens last year," he said.

In 1996, Bodycote called on shareholders for £11.2 million in a one-for-three rights at 610p to help to finance the £5.7 million acquisition of Bruekens, the Scandinavian group. The Hit deal will give Bodycote clear leadership in France in the contract heat treatment market.

## Record results from Siebe and still growing



In Russia, Siebe is helping to automate baby food factories to meet that nation's growing needs.

Interim results for the six months ended 30 September, 1997

	6 months to 30.9.97	6 months to 30.9.96	% change 1997-1996
Turnover (£m)	1,706.5	1,471.4	up 16.0%
Pre-tax Profit (£m)	221.7	190.4	up 16.4%
ROS	13.0%	12.9%	
Earnings per Share (pence)	27.7	24.0	up 15.4%
Dividend per Share (pence)	5.4	4.9	up 10.2%

Control Systems      Temperature & Appliance Controls      Industrial Equipment

"Siebe continued to make considerable progress in the first half of the current year as witnessed by these results. Earnings per share of 27.7p were up again strongly, this time by 15.4%. Excluding the impact of adverse translational exchange rates, underlying earnings per share were up by 26.3%. So far as the balance of this year is concerned, organic order backlog growth continues across the Group and second half trading is off to an excellent start. The economies of North America and the UK are strong and key parts of Continental Europe are looking more robust. We do have some concerns about our Far Eastern markets, but at this point the region continues to show good overall growth for Siebe. Volatile exchange rates are likely to be a continuing factor in the Group's reported results but here too we are well positioned to respond to this issue. Having taken account of all these factors we are confident that Siebe will deliver another outstanding performance for the current year."

Barrie Stephens, Chairman

## MoD deal funded by £1bn issue

By ALANDAIR MURRAY

ANNINGTON HOMES, which last year bought the Ministry of Defence homes portfolio, is preparing a £1 billion securitised bond issue to complete its funding of the £1.66 billion deal.

Annington is expected to come to the market in about two weeks selling bonds backed by income streams on the properties, including the portion of the estate that generates non-guaranteed rent.

Annington made a £900 million bond issue in October covering the part of the estate whose rents are still guaranteed by the MoD.

Annington was set up last year by Nomura, the Japanese bank that owns 75 per cent of the company, to manage a portfolio of more than 57,000 homes bought from the MoD.

The sale of the homes came under political fire. Critics claimed that the former Government sold them too cheaply. Annington has already sold about 300 homes for £10 million and has 2,400 to put on the market. The MoD pays it rent of £107 million.

## Bidder unmoved by Colloids results

By OUR CITY STAFF

HERCULES, the unwanted £1 billion bidder for Allied Colloids, responded to the announcement of a 52 per cent rise in pre-tax profits for its half year to December 1997 to be lower than the £6.8 million achieved in the first half of last year.

The analyst explained that historically margin growth, not sales growth, had been the problem with Allied Colloids since raw materials costs increased a couple of years ago. However, doubt was cast on the sustainability of the margin increase by one analyst, who pointed out that margins at CPS, a recent acquisition, were about 18 per cent and so its integration had artificially increased group margins.

The defence document from David Farrar, chief executive, and the rest of the Allied Colloids board must appear on or before December 10. In the meantime the interim dividend rises 13.3 per cent to 7.25p.

Mr Farrar said: "We will be communicating with shareholders shortly to explain that they should reject this offer because we believe that we can deliver better value to our shareholders as an independent company. We continue to urge shareholders to take no action in respect of the offer."

The alternative is to say that if commercial organisations are to continue to face increased competition from new subscription and advertiser-financed channels launched by the BBC then commercial companies should have greater freedom to develop their businesses.

A number of large commercial radio stations further add that BBC Radio 1 should be privatised and sold off. This would mean extra competition in the short term but would in the end extend the power and reach of commercial radio.

By RAYMOND SNODDY  
MEDIA EDITOR

COMMERCIAL media organisations meet later this month to consider whether further regulations are needed to prevent the BBC "distorting the market" by new and planned commercial ventures. The ITV Association, the body representing the ITV companies, and leading magazine companies such as the National Magazine Com-

pany and Emap are expected to join the Commercial Radio Companies Association in looking at the present impact of the BBC on the market. The previous Government encouraged the BBC to move into commercial ventures to try to subsidise the licence fee — a policy that the present Government seems to share. The point of the meeting is to see whether there is enough common ground between com-

mercial television, commercial radio and magazine publishers to come together to campaign on the issue.

Two approaches are likely to be considered. One is to approach the Government to say that the commercial activities of the BBC, the UK's largest media organisation, should be more tightly controlled. The alternative is to say that if commercial organisations are to continue to face in-

creased competition from new subscription and advertiser-financed channels launched by the BBC then commercial companies should have greater freedom to develop their businesses.

A number of large commercial radio stations further add that BBC Radio 1 should be privatised and sold off. This would mean extra competition in the short term but would in the end extend the power and reach of commercial radio.

The alternative is to say that if commercial organisations are to continue to face increased competition from new subscription and advertiser-financed channels launched by the BBC then

## STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Stock Market Writer  
of the Year

## Talk in the City pushes up Hambros share price

HAMBROS, one of the few remaining merchant banks in the City, came within a whisker of its year's high of 270p on talk that its days of independence may be numbered.

The price ended 10p better at 267p, with more than a million shares changing hands in a market where the normal transaction is only 10,000 shares. At these levels the group is valued at £475 million.

City speculators claim that someone is ready to offer terms of at least 300p a share. Once again, the name of Société Générale, the French bank, is being bandied about.

There has been a steady contraction over the years among the ranks of City banks and securities houses after a big influx of foreign money. There was also speculation about a possible bid for Schroders, up 8p at 181.57p in a thin market, and the possible sale by Pearson, 3p better at 830p, of Lazard, its merchant banking arm.

Meanwhile, NatWest Bank finished 10p better, at 889p after finally disposing of its global equities arm jointly to Bankers Trust and Deutsche Morgan Grenfell. The asking price fell short of expectations, but it was sweetened by the hint of a possible share buyback. Speculators say that NatWest could now find itself attractive to a bidder.

Share prices closed just below their best of the day after taking heart from solid performances in New York and Hong Kong. But trading conditions remained thin with investors keeping an anxious eye on the Bank of England to see if it raises rates after its monetary policy meeting that gets under way today.

The FTSE 100 index closed up 55.5 points at 4,977.6.

BTCC rose 10p to 162p with the help of encouraging comments from Henderson the broker, which met the company earlier this week. Zeneca came off the boil, falling 2p to 19.25 in spite of the positive outcome to Monday's trip by brokers to the group's research and development centre at Macclesfield. Two brokers, ABN Amro Hoare Govett and Greig Middleton, remain unconvinced and have reiterated their 'sell' recommendations.

Shield Diagnostics was steady at 702.5p. There is talk of a link-up with Abbott Laboratories. Demand for



John Simons, the chief executive of Hazlewood Foods, saw his company's share price increase 4p to 159p

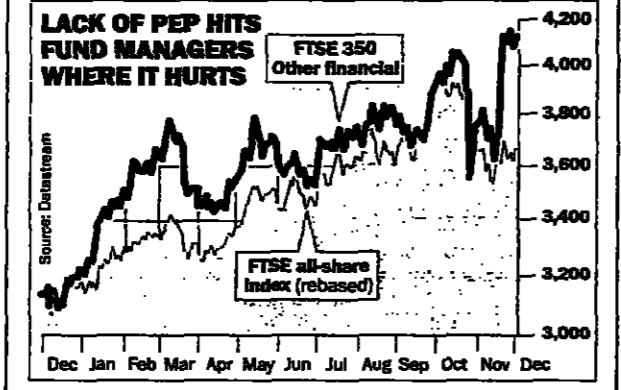
Shield's shares has been fuelled by prospects for the Activated Factor 12 process that detects heart ailments.

A boardroom reshuffle at Royal & SunAllied lifted the price 14p to 560p. The group can also begin buying back its own shares.

The recent record-breaking run enjoyed by Vodafone has come to a halt, with the price

falling 10p to 387.5p after Credit Lyonnais Laing, the broker, downgraded its recommendation from 'buy' to a 'hold'. Ionics hit a new low with a fall of 25p at 111.5p reflecting last month's disappointing trading news. The shares have now plunged from a peak of 42p this year.

A bullish trading update lifted Williams 9.5p to 329.5p.



THE speculative run fuelled by independent fund managers on the back of Merrill Lynch's bid for Mercury Asset Management appears to be over.

The introduction of the Government's Isa savings scheme looks like making a dent in their future revenues. Existing Tessa and Peps will be scrapped in 1999 and the tax advantages enjoyed by wealthier savers will be curtailed. M&G Group, the subject of recent talk about a bid from Halifax, tumbled 42.5p to 115.5p, while Perpetual shed 17.5p to £24.20 and

Henderson Administration rallied to close 5p ahead, at 113.95.

Quoted stockbrokers Charles Stanley, on 178.5p, Walker Crips on 68.5p, and Brewin Dolphin on 232p were unchanged.

One broker commented: "It's still only a consultative document. There is sure to be much lobbying before it is introduced. I don't think the Government will introduce legislation with a retrospective tax burden".

He admitted it would not be a healthy environment for savers with more than £50,000 invested.

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Source: Datastream

Source

The Government's role in promoting and preserving jobs is now firmly in the spotlight. The current focus for debate is the fate of Britain's coal industry, with reported splits in the Cabinet over whether the Government should act to save miners' jobs serving to remind us all of old divisions between interventionism and laissez faire.

Coal is a tough political issue for Labour, not just because of the threat to 5,000 jobs but because the industry's demise has been hastened by the design of Conservative privatisation of the electricity sector. Old Labour is on the march, breaking free from the Government's stranglehold on backbenchers (or indeed any dissenting opinion to fight for a traditional constituency).

Messrs Brown and Blair are unlikely to respond to calls for large amounts of government money to save coal. They have not worked so hard to shift new

## Hunt for detail in national jobs strategy

Labour away from its past to fall at the first hurdle. Part of their thinking, as ever, is about presentation and style. Cool Britannia is in the business of promoting trendy, entrepreneurial industries such as film and design, not dirty old industries such as coal.

Some would argue that Government shouldn't intervene at all but, even in this era of liberal economics, it seems entirely legitimate for Government to attempt to maximise employment opportunities. New Labour's obsession with image makes it hard to determine whether there has been any consistency in its efforts so far. Each industry which lobbies on the grounds of saving jobs has to be examined with a cool head.

Thousands of jobs are deemed to be in the hands of government

policymakers. Should it save 5,000 jobs in mining by subsidising coal, or a potential 16,000 jobs in aerospace by supporting the new generation Rolls-Royce Trent engine, or an estimated 50,000 jobs in the design and manufacture of racing cars, or even the 90,000 jobs which the new Union of Country Sports Workers says are at risk from the banning of fox hunting and other forms of hunting, shooting and fishing?

The Government's championing of creative industries over old industries fits perfectly into the image that it is manufacturing of a new, modern Britain but, to be fair, it also has some substance. There are some good arguments why Britain's coal industry should be allowed to wind down, not least that gas is cheaper and cleaner



and the Government is committed to tough targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. The environment is a compelling argument against coal and, to those who argue against over reliance on a single source of fuel, why not plough more government money, if it is available, into the development of alternative energies.

The creative industries are, as Gordon Brown has said, something that Britain is very good at and which should be encouraged. These are the jobs of the future. Quite so. But it would be quite wrong for the Government to offer anything but carefully targeted help. The constant moan of the film industry is that Britain can't finance its own domestic film-making despite having many of the best technicians, animators, directors and actors in the world. But in a global marketplace for skills, there is no reason why their job opportunities shouldn't continue to flourish even if financing comes from elsewhere. At the risk of being charged with cultural philistinism, surely the priority should be to ensure that excellent training of our experts is available

rather than financing films on these shores for reasons of sentimental cultural nationalism.

Success, in itself, argues against government hand-outs. This is what makes the decision to exempt Formula One from the ban on tobacco advertising so mystifying. Britain boasts a £1.3 billion industry in the manufacture of racing cars, half of which is exported. Ninety per cent of all race and rally cars are made in Britain. This world-beating expertise is surely not going to lose its market even if we lose the British Grand Prix from Silverstone.

The same argument could be employed to question the recent £200 million grant to Rolls-Royce. The company assured the Government that it has a ready market for its new engines and that its

investment would be returned with interest. It therefore seems odd that the company felt it needed a boost from the Government. Nevertheless, if any industry is a legitimate candidate for a public/private partnership, one which is of strategic national importance (and a very large employer) is probably it.

So what amid these great matters of state can be said about the hunting lobby which has argued against the hunting bill on the grounds of jobs lost to the countryside? The Government first has to take an objective look at estimates of job losses of 90,000 and upwards. The rural, agricultural and allied workers' section of the Transport and General Workers' Union puts the number of jobs lost solely to hunting at 200. Then it should ask itself whether field sports is of strategic importance to Britain. In this case, at least, the Government ought to feel free to follow its populist instincts.

## Clouds over coal future matched by disenchantment with Labour

**Miners want the focus on energy policy and not RJB, Christine Buckley says**

**I**t is grey and overcast in Rossington, a mining village south of Doncaster. Inside the half-empty welfare club, miners feel the presence of a bigger cloud — the one hanging over the future of the coal industry.

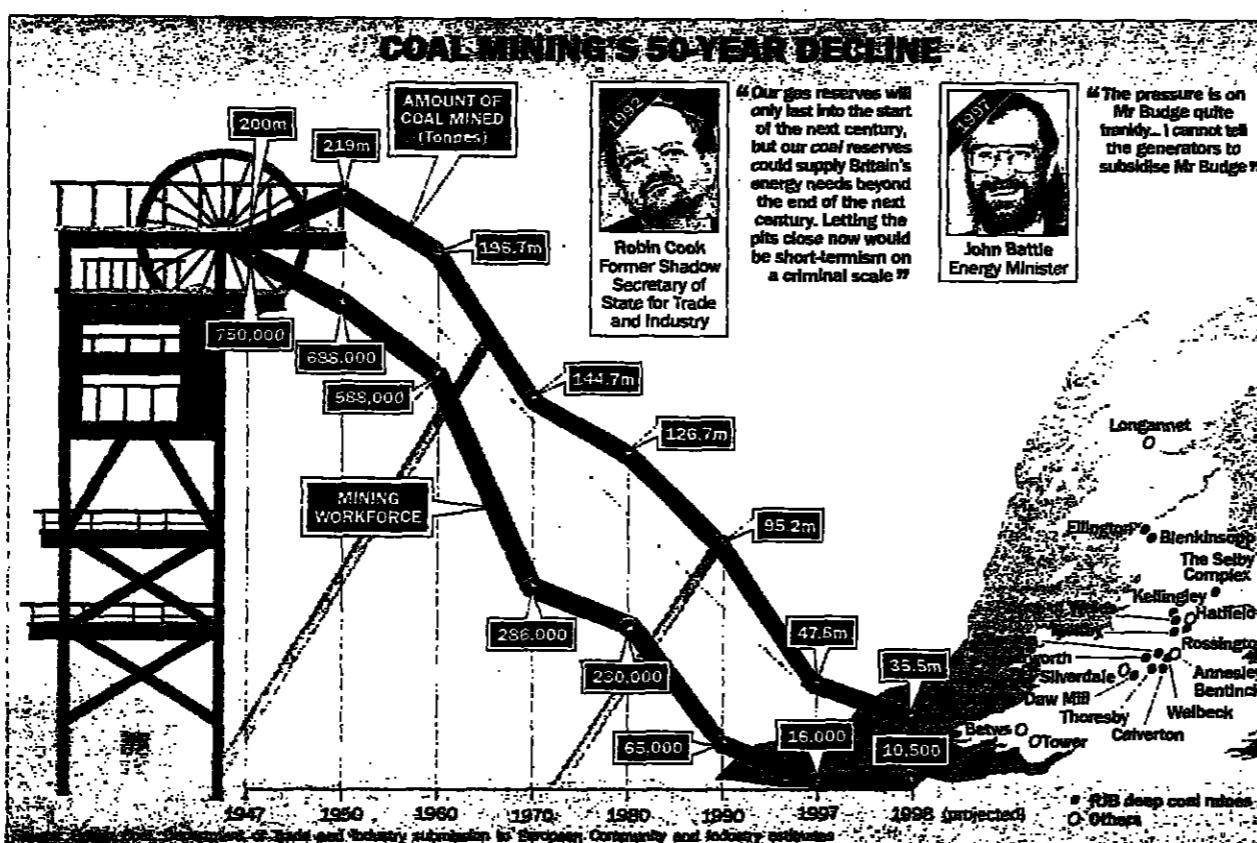
Kevin Rowe has worked at the colliery for 19 years barring a brief spell when it was mothballed before being re-opened by RJB Mining. For him the uncertainty that engulfs the industry has an all-too-familiar feel.

The latest crisis may not be a surprise given power generation's dash for gas. But the fact that it is unfolding under a Labour Government is a surprise. Mr Rowe said: "The uncertainty is even worse now than under the Tories. Then we had the Tories against the miners but now it seems like the Labour Party is against Richard Budge. It all seems very personalised and we are just pawns in this. The Labour Government seems to have washed their hands of it."

Today, along with hundreds of other miners, Rossington workers will go to the Commons, scene of the Trade and Industry Select Committee inquiry into coal, to lobby for action by ministers.

Miners at Rossington are hopeful the pit's plentiful reserves will stave off imminent closure in the shutdowns expected to be announced shortly by RJB, and that the village will be spared the desolation of others nearby when their main source of employment went. The hope is shared by other Rossington residents fearful that the hallmarks of high regional unemployment — crime and drug use — will arrive on their doorsteps. The deprivation can be seen around Doncaster in areas such as Armthorpe, Bentley and South Elmsall.

When production stopped at Rossington before RJB bought the business a couple of workshops were built by English Partnerships to encourage miners to start new trades.



Nobody bothered, says John Blakey, who has been mining at Rossington for 22 years, because there was no point. Without the mine, the life-blood of the village was gone and there was little prospect of creating a new business that stood any chance of survival.

The men who work at Rossington — and many more in the rest of the industry — are clinging to the hope that their mines will survive. Most have abandoned the Labour Party. They are disillusioned that the row over the coal crisis, which could soon see the shutdown of eight to ten pits, has been painted by the Government as a show-down with the profitable RJB, which is supposedly asking for subsidies. They want the debate to focus on an energy policy that Labour promised but which they say it has not delivered.

Charlie Ross, 23 years at Rossington, says: "Look at all that Cook said [when Robin Cook railed at the Conservative prime minister for the pit closure programme] and now they are sitting back and letting it happen. I believe there is animosity between John Battle [the Energy Minister] and Richard Budge."

Alan Horner, a miner for 25 years, argues: "It isn't Richard Budge or the Tories that we are talking about, it is Great

Britain because ultimately the country will pay for the pit closures. We will pay more if we are reliant on imported fuels because if you close the pit you can only rely on imported fuel."

The Government has

pledged, on many occasions, an energy policy that is diverse, sustainable and secure.

But its critics say it is doing nothing to put that into action.

Meanwhile, the rush to gas by power generators gas threatens to make the country over-dependent on that fuel, in a similar way to its over-dependence on coal in the 1980s.

**Look at all that Robin Cook said... now they are sitting back and letting it happen**

It has been estimated that in a few years imported gas could account for up to 80 per cent of the UK's generation needs. With home gas reserves estimated as low as 13 years if heavy use is made of them then Britain will quickly become dependent on imported gas. Many industry watchers warn that such a predicament will leave the UK vulnerable to sudden fluctuations in price.

Coal burn in generation has fallen dramatically over recent years. In 1989 nearly 80 million tonnes of deep-mined coal

was produced by British Coal. Last year it was just 31 million tonnes. Next year, according to Department of Trade and Industry figures produced for the European Commission, just 20.75 million tonnes will be deep-mined.

The shrinking market has brought coal to a new crisis after RJB failed to win sufficient contracts for the capacity it has available. Pit closures seem an inevitability unless the Government introduces measures to secure greater demand. Until recently there had seemed no sign of this. The Department for Trade

policy entirely in hock to the market may also have begun to focus minds. Now a programme to look at ways of ensuring the medium-term future of coal is under way. It may be too little and it may be too late, but it is all there is on the horizon for coal.

The Government has done much to emphasise how coal companies must be price competitive to win contracts from the privatised generators, which have no such obligations. The coal industry argues that there is little point in bringing down coal prices if those reductions are not passed on to electricity customers. Central to the whole issue of the size of the market and the role of coal in an energy policy is the argument that the market is rigged for profit. The market allows power producers to keep reduced coal costs as profits.

Coal producers are forced to compete with falling world coal prices, which is largely driven by countries such as Australia, South Africa and the United States where the industries are relatively new and coal is cheaper to produce.

UK coal also has to contend with supplies produced from Germany, where the industry is subsidised by the Government.

savings account. He was nervous, hesitant and distinctly tetchy with anyone who sought too much detail. And who could blame him? Labour lost the election before last because they reckoned anyone earning more than £30,000 was filthy rich, and it fell to the £12 million offshore trust fund man to provide a new definition of the term. It seems anyone with investments worth more than £50,000 in a PEP is entitled to scant sympathy as they are forced to take action to avoid huge tax bills by the millennium.

But why on earth subject Robinson, an amiable cove and free with the keys to his holiday villa if you know him well enough, to such an ordeal, and so soon after being outed by the press? Surely the job could have gone to Dawn Primarolo, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, who has responsibility for tax and is hardly known as a member of new Labour's Plutocrat Tendency?

**• SOMEONE else who looked as if he would rather be anywhere else was Colin Smith, chief executive of Safeway, at the company's Christmas party for the press earlier this week. Smith has always struck me as cheerful enough the past, but I am told he was distinctly lacking in the usual Christmas cheer. I don't suppose it was anything to do with all the trouble Safeway has been experiencing of late — that failed Asda merger, the profit warning. Cheer up, Colin — no one blames you for everything.**



**is his mother's cousin. All perfectly above board, though. Merrydown, far from having its roots in some medieval cider-vat, was founded in 1946 by Ian Howie and Jack Ward, the former an amateur wine-maker, the latter a former POW and serial escaper who used to make the stuff in the camp. They set up in business together, and Howie married Purdey's mother, who was Ward's cousin.**

**• AN INBRED lot down in Horam, East Sussex, perhaps — it is Cold Comfort Farm territory, after all. Richard Purdey, now non-executive deputy chairman of Merrydown and most likely the last of the founding families to work for the cider maker, is step-son of one founder. The other**

**GEORFFREY ROBINSON, the Paymaster General, looked as if he would rather have been anywhere else on earth than the QE2 Conference Centre yesterday for the launch of the Government's new individual**

**regulation.**

## Old men forget

**NOW the Guinness report is out in the open, and the guilty men have been duly named and shamed, perhaps a little more ancient history involving Jack Lyons, one of the chief protagonists, might now be made public. Lyons, of course, was spared prison but fined £3 million seven years ago because of his precarious state of health. Now a hale and hearty Sir, he requested only last week the chance to put the whole Guinness business behind him and get on with**



**"The good news is at least all our assets are liquid!"**

## Hassall factor

**EVERY BERKEL makes industrial weighing machinery. George Simpson — now Lord Simpson of Dunkeld — last year, put in a couple of lieutenants to restructure it. According to an internal GEC memo, the work is done and they are on their way. The troubleshooters are Mike Hassall, managing director, and Ian Slaughter, commercial director. Presumably Hassall provided the trouble and Slaughter did the shooting.**

**MARTIN WALLER**



## An alternative for supporters of mutuality

**From Mr David Holliday**  
Sir, I read of the continuing threat to mutual societies of all types and wonder if there may be a card which those wishing to remain with a mutual association might play.

To date we have been offered Hobson's Choice when a society demutualises. But it seems to me that as an alternative to a windfall payment, those wishing to remain members of a mutual association could elect to have their mortgages, investments and pensions transferred to another existing or new mutual fund, at the expense of

the society wishing to demutualise, in lieu of a payment which effectively entitles them to remain with their original financial institution in its new guise.

True, the temptation of a whacking great windfall is considerable, but those valuing the mutual status could thus have a comeback against carpetbagging — especially if such options to remain with a mutual organisation received official backing.

Yours faithfully,  
**DAVID HOLLOWAY**,  
95 West Graham Street,  
Glasgow.

## Danger of imposing a 'married persons tax'

**From Mr Philip Johnson**  
Sir, Suggestions that Labour may follow the US example in the overhaul of the present system of family credit, and might also end independent taxation of husbands and wives, would be a direct attack on married couples and the family as an institution. Joint taxation of husband and wife will encourage cohabitation whilst discouraging marriage.

As illustrated in *The Times* of November 29, joint taxation of married couples each earning £20,000 per year would lead to an additional £4,000 annual income tax liability.

We have been happily married for 12 years. We are a working couple with two young children and both earn slightly above the national average income. Like millions of others, our finances are fairly finely balanced. If combined taxation is reintroduced, given the choice between re-

maining married but being pushed very hard financially or obtaining a quickie "divorce of convenience" to benefit from separate taxation status, we would probably opt for the latter.

If combined taxation on married couples were then to end, or our financial circumstances enabled us comfortably to pay what would be a discriminatory "married persons tax", we would then "re-marry" as we would prefer it to be this way.

Successive Governments' fiscal policies have penalised married couples as a soft target. Gordon Brown should appreciate that a large constituency of married middle-class working couples voted them in.

Yours faithfully,  
**PHILIP JOHNSON**,  
Parsonage House,  
Church Street,  
Henfield, West Sussex.

# Williams optimism cheers the market

By OUR CITY STAFF

SHARES in Williams, the former conglomerate, rose 3½p to 32½p after the security and alarm services group released a positive trading statement that reassured the market.

Analysts had become concerned about the impact of the strong pound and the likely effect of the Far East economic crisis. Dealers said that they found the statement reassuring on both current trading and on growth prospects.

The analyst said that the market was heartened by the company's announcement that the promising outlook indicated at the time of the interim statement proved to be well founded, with the achievement of "pleasing" per-

## Eldridge in shares shake-up

ELDRIDGE POPE, operator of the Slurping Toad and Fireside Inns pub concepts, is to revamp its two-tier share structure by franchising its restricted voting A shares to create a single class of ordinary shares (Dominic Walsh writes).

Christopher Pope, chairman, said the proposal would open up the group to a wider range of funding opportunities to step up expansion.

The news came as the group reported a 23.6 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £5.4 million in the year to September 30. Earnings per share rose to 20.2p (16.0p). A final dividend of 3.95p, payable on February 6, makes 6.1p (5.5p). The shares rose strongly, gaining 22½p to 268p.



DES JENSON

FORUMS from all divisions in the second half.

Williams

said that the prospects for 1998 are good. According to analysts, the main positive feature was the reassurance by Williams that recent economic turbulence in the Far East had had little effect on the group's Asia-Pacific businesses. The statement said: "Fluctuations in the value of sterling affect the translation of earnings rather than trading performance."

One analyst said: "The key point was the reassurance on the Far East. In one sense this was good news, simply because it wasn't bad news."

Shares in Williams have fallen sharply in recent weeks, depressed by expectations that its profits would be hit hard by the economic problems in the Far East and sterling's continuing strength.

In its trading statement, the company said that overall demand in fire protection and security had been good.

The performance of the home improvement product division had been underpinned by continued firm demand in North America and the United Kingdom, while market conditions in France and Germany remained challenging.

In Chubb, the programme of business integration and performance improvement had proceeded well, with excellent support from the operational management team, the company said.

For 1998, Williams said that its fire protection and security businesses would continue to benefit from their strong market positions and broad product range throughout the world.

These strengths would be further underpinned by the full integration of Chubb, delivering lower costs, improved competitive positions and accelerated sales growth in many of its markets.

the group says that normalised earnings rose from 5.06p to 6.26p. The half-year dividend rises from 2.4p to 2.6p.

Hazlewood said that share buybacks, acquisitions and capital investment are all equally attractive propositions.

The group recently asked shareholders at its annual meeting for permission to buy back up to 5 per cent of its

## Ericsson confirms 10,000 jobs to go

FROM OUR FOREIGN STAFF

ERICSSON, the Swedish

telecoms group, confirmed yesterday that it was planning to cut up to 10,000 more jobs in the future, part of a restructuring plan started two years ago in its Infocom division.

The company was responding to a suggestion that about 10,000 new cutbacks were planned in coming years. Karin Almquist Lwendahl, a company spokeswoman, confirmed that the group was planning further cutbacks, but emphasised that this was not new.

"This is not something we are just doing out of the blue.

## Hazlewood blames disposals for fall

By OUR CITY STAFF

PRE-TAX profits of Hazlewood

Foods fell from £1.4 million to £1.0 million in the six months to September 30. The drop was put down primarily to a deepening of losses on disposals from £4.7 million to £9.5 million.

The convenience foods group's earnings per share fell from 3.09p to 2.07p, although

This is part of an ongoing process," she said yesterday.

Ms Lwendahl said the cutbacks were started in the Infocom division in 1995 and had resulted in about 10,000 jobs being cut back. "Now we have reached the halfway point approximately. This means that in one way or another about another 10,000 people will be affected," she added.

However, she could not say over what period the cutbacks would be made. Ericsson's shares were trading four crowns lower at 320.5 (24).

shares, sparkling speculation of a full buyback.

However, John Simons, the chief executive, said: "At the moment we haven't done it [a buyback] but I think it is something we will regularly review and then take the option as and when."

He said the group has three options for the use of its cash — further capital investment,

a share buyback or acquisitions.

In the half year, the group was cash positive. Borrowings were reduced from £94.2 million to £50.7 million, while gearing was cut from 51 per cent to 28 per cent.

The group is planning the reinvestment of up to £10 million of proceeds from disposals in special projects.

## Scottish Radio still out to add stations

BY CHRIS AYRES

SCOTTISH RADIO, the newspapers and commercial

radio group that owns stations such as Radio Clyde, yesterday said that it is still looking to buy new stations and apply for new licences.

The company renewed its commitment to expansion as it reported a 33 per cent rise in pre-tax profits for the year to September 30, from £7 million to £9 million, on turnover of £37.4 million, up 32 per cent from £28.4 million.

The company paid off all its borrowings during the year, and now has cash balances of £1.7 million, with net assets totalling £22 million.

## BUSINESS ROUNDUP

### LVMH sets up new cosmetics group

LVMH-Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton has formed a new fragrances and cosmetics group to intensify co-operation among its fragrances and cosmetics companies and to develop their international competitiveness. The company said that its fragrances and cosmetics group will comprise Parfums Christian Dior, Guerlain, Parfums Givenchy and Parfums Kenzo, and is one of the "most powerful operators in this business sector on a worldwide scale".

The company added: "It will aim to reinforce the fragrances and cosmetics companies' strengths by accelerating the development of synergies supporting the companies' shared commercial interests and co-ordinating their distribution strategies while preserving each brand's identity." Patrick Ched, chairman and chief executive officer of Parfums Christian Dior, has been appointed president of the new group, while Elizabeth Desvignes has been appointed the financial controller. She will continue in her previous post as chief financial officer of Parfums Givenchy until a successor has been appointed.

### Pub group expands

THE OLD ENGLISH PUB COMPANY has completed the acquisition of seven individual coaching inns at a total cost of £5.89 million, taking its estate to 111 houses. The biggest of the newly acquired inns is the Cock Hotel, at Stony Stratford, Buckinghamshire, for which the company has paid £1.87 million. In all, the group is paying £4.54 million in cash and £1.35 million in shares. Barry Warwick, chief executive, said that trading in the first eight months of the current financial year was "substantially ahead of last year", with organic growth in November of 8.3 per cent on a like-for-like basis.

### Richards challenge

RICHARDS, the textiles group, said it has received a requisition for an extraordinary meeting of shareholders to remove three of the company's directors and appoint three new directors in their place. The company said the requisition proposes that David Staveley, Ian Lakin and Graham Sharp be appointed to the company and Brian Gilbert, Raymond Dinsdale and Frederick Dalgarne be removed from office as directors of the company. The directors said they will write to shareholders in due course. The shares remained unchanged yesterday at 35p.

### Field seeks foothold

FIELD, the paper and packaging group, is seeking to establish a foothold in the Italian and Spanish pharmaceutical packaging and labelling market by acquiring operations in Italy and Spain with a turnover level in the range of £5 million to £10 million, according to Keith Gilchrist, the chief executive. Field raised pre-tax profits 14 per cent to £12 million in the six months to October 5, on sales up 8.5 per cent to £117 million. The interim dividend rises from 3.1p to 3.4p, out of earnings up 15 per cent to 15.3p.

### Amersham signs deal

AMERSHAM PHARMACIA BIOTECH, a subsidiary of Nycomed Amersham, and Affymetrix have agreed a three-year non-exclusive, worldwide sales and marketing deal. Amersham Pharmacia Biotech will act as an agent for the sale of some Affymetrix Genechip reagents, systems and software. Amersham Pharmacia will sell the Genechip product line as part of its current offering of reagents and instruments. Affymetrix and Amersham Pharmacia will coordinate the sales and marketing of some Genechip products.

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CHANGING TIMES

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# Koike guilty plea in Japanese extortion case

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

JAPAN'S most notorious racketeer, Ryuichi Koike, pleaded guilty yesterday to extorting tens of millions of dollars from top Japanese financial firms in what has become the nation's muckiest business scandal this decade.

On the first day of his trial in a Tokyo court, Koike admitted that he had taken payoffs from the "Big Four" brokerages — Nomura Securities, Daiwa Securities and the now failed Yamaichi Securities — as well as from commercial bank Daiichi Kangyo.

Koike, 54, was brought into the crowded courtroom wearing handcuffs and with a rope held by court security officials passing through his arms and tied around his waist.

After a prosecutor read out the indictments Koike admitted he had demanded compensation and received cash from the five financial institutions.

difficult to cut their ties to the underworld.

Koike's methods were simple. He bought shares in DKB, then used threats of troublemaking to obtain funds from the bank. He used those funds to buy stakes in all the Big Four brokerages so he could hold their meetings to ransom.

Last week the former president of Japan's largest brokerage, Nomura Securities, and two other former senior executives pleaded guilty to paying off Koike.

Yesterday's trial was thought unlikely to lead to any further big revelations, but it was another cause for gloom in Japan's financial sector as it prepares for reforms aimed at boosting competition and raising financial standards.

In November alone Japan suffered four financial failures, including last week's collapse of Yamaichi Securities.



Police guard Samsan Bank, which has suspended operations

## IMF chief sets out 'seven pillars of wisdom' for Asia

Camdessus says listen to market signals even if negative. George Sivell reports

SOUTH-EAST Asia should restructure and reform to get itself out of economic crisis, Michel Camdessus, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, said.

The Asian miracle economies have fizzled, but the region should rebuild its shattered ambitions through structural and policy changes, he said.

He was speaking to a conference coinciding with a meeting of Asian finance ministers. M Camdessus said hedge funds and other market participants were not the main cause of recent financial problems, and urged governments of the region to respect signals given by the markets even when they were unfavourable. Addressing the Business Forum of the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean), the IMF chief outlined "seven pillars of new wisdom" for the region. He said these included maintaining "an appropriate exchange rate and exchange rate regime", strengthening the financial systems and government reforms to promote domestic competition and "help to ensure benefits are widely shared". Other advice to the region was more "peer pressure" among countries to make sure prudent policies were being followed since the problems of one nation can quickly affect its neighbours.

"This was something missing in Asia ... you don't like to criticise your neighbour," M Camdessus said. "I would like to be your neighbour," he quipped, to laughter. M Camdessus, along with officials from the World Bank, the US, Japan, South Korea, China and Australia, are meeting with Asean finance ministers.

Asean groups the economies of Brunei, Burma, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Asia has suffered currency devaluations, bank failures and sharply weakened share markets since the summer, when Thailand's economic crisis triggered an exodus of investors from the region. The problems forced Thailand and Indonesia to seek IMF aid.

M Camdessus told the gathering of Asian businessmen and government officials to "continue being market-friendly" because much of the region's success depended on the success of their markets.

Datuk Ser Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the Malaysian Prime Minister, has been a critic of hedge funds and currency speculators, accusing them of selling down

markets to undermine his country. M Camdessus

said, however, that "it would be a mistake to blame hedge funds or other market participants as the central agents of turmoil in Asia". In answer to one Malaysian, M Camdessus

also said speculators were out to make money and often focused on countries with

economic problems. He said such activities were not directed at countries where the financial structures ... are very strong". Dr Mahathir wants foreign exchange trading to be regulated, and in a speech on Monday suggested that currency trading be put under the purview of the World Trade Organisation.

In his sixth point of advice, M Camdessus said the region should provide "timely, accurate" and "comprehensive data", saying that transparency should be a practice in good times and in bad.

He ended his speech on a hopeful note, saying he was sure the region's crisis "will lead to renaissance", adding: "The miracle is over, but the maturity is with us."



Camdessus: advice

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## Yamaichi chief dies of fatigue

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

SOUTH KOREA will sign a bail-out deal with the International Monetary Fund today, ending a period of confusion over the fate of the package.

Lim Chang Yuel, the Finance Minister, said that the agreement, still under negotiation, would not require the liquidation of any South Korean bank.

Chung Duk Koo, South Korea's chief negotiator, said the tentative agreement did not contain measures specifically aimed at the *chaebol*, South Korea's big business groups.

Mr Chung, also an assistant deputy finance minister, said the agreement contained steps directed at broad corporate activities, but would give no more details. He said that the two sides had reached a basic agreement and the negotiations would now focus on numbers.

Earlier, Kang Man Soo, the Deputy Finance Minister, said the IMF programme would contain "substantial" measures covering macroeconomic co-operation, fiscal affairs — including the budget and monetary policy — and restructuring of the financial system. He was speaking at a meeting of finance ministers

of 14 Asian countries and the United States.

In Seoul yesterday there was widespread confusion in financial markets and the Government itself about whether an agreement had been reached and what it contained.

The confusion began in the early hours of the morning when Mr Lim emerged from an overnight negotiating session to announce that a tentative agreement had been reached.

Mr Lim was also the official who announced an agreement had been reached after an overnight session on Sunday. The agreement turned out to be tentative as well and later unravelled.

On November 21, the Seoul Government said it would seek IMF standby loans of \$20 billion (£5.9 billion), but Mr Lim later said the amount would be far more than that.

Seoul is desperate for assistance because of a ticking time bomb with its short-term debt — the reason it called in the IMF.

Economists say South Korea's foreign debt had grown to about \$120 billion as of the end of September.

AN account from the failed Japanese brokerage, Yamaichi Securities, died of fatigue after working for 14 days without a break when the company folded.

The accounting section chief, 38, died at his home in Tokyo last Friday. He worked without a break from a week before the "Big Four" brokerage went under in Japan's largest post-war failure, and did not leave the office during that period.

After returning home for the first time on November 27, a week after Yamaichi announced that it was closing, he was found dead in bed the following morning, a company spokesman said. Investigators are treating the case as *karoshi*, or death from overwork. Police made no comment on the case.

The preceding day, Seiichi Tanigashira, 40, an employee at a firm affiliated with Yamaichi, committed suicide by jumping off a building in the financial district of Osaka. He was a deputy section chief at Taiheiyo Securities Co.



## Equities extend gains

**TRADING PERIOD:** Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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1997	High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	%	PE
12/1	High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	%	PE
12/2	530	530	Banana	547.5	47	25	140
12/3	27	27	Barclays Opt	13	13	13	60.4
12/4	105	104	Barclays Plc	105	104	104	10.4
12/5	300	300	Barley	95	75	25	75
12/6	225	175	Barclays Grp	150	150	150	15.0
12/7	117	117	Barclays Inv	150	150	150	15.0
12/8	61	61	Barclays Stays	150	150	150	15.0
12/9	42	42	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/10	50	50	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/11	52	52	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/12	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/13	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/14	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/15	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/16	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/17	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/18	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/19	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/20	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/21	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/22	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/23	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/24	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/25	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/26	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/27	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/28	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/29	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/30	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/31	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/32	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/33	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/34	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/35	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/36	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/37	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/38	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/39	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/40	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/41	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/42	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/43	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/44	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/45	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/46	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/47	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/48	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/49	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/50	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/51	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/52	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/53	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/54	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/55	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/56	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/57	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/58	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/59	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/60	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/61	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/62	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/63	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/64	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/65	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/66	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/67	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/68	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/69	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/70	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/71	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/72	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/73	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/74	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/75	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/76	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/77	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/78	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/79	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/80	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/81	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/82	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/83	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/84	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/85	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/86	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/87	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/88	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/89	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/90	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/91	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/92	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/93	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/94	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/95	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/96	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/97	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/98	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/99	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/100	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/101	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/102	125	125	Barclays Plc	150	150	150	15.0
12/103	125	125	Bar				

## BRIEFLY NOTED

## Trill till you drop

**OPERA:** The 400th anniversary of the birth of opera, hitherto somewhat overshadowed by the present partial state of certain opera houses, has at last inspired a celebration worthy of this most extravagant of art forms. Plans for a festival modestly titled *Universe of Opera* will be unveiled in Austria tomorrow. To take place over three days next July, it will bring together what its organisers claim will be more than 50 "superstars of opera", who will perform "the most beautiful arias that four centuries have produced" nightly to a 50,000-strong audience in the Vienna Praterstadion, with live television broadcasts. Those "most beautiful arias" won't include any from the work generally regarded as the first opera, Jacopo Peri's *Dafne* of 1597. Its music is entirely lost.

**DANCE:** Despite mixed reviews, Matthew Bourne's groundbreaking Adventures in Motion Pictures company seems to have struck gold again with its West End production of *Cinderella*. The show, originally scheduled to close on January 10, has been extended to February 14 at the Piccadilly Theatre. Last year Bourne's *Swan Lake* became the longest-running commercial ballet ever mounted in London, and later transferred to Broadway.

**HERITAGE:** The nation's "favourite historic house"? Apparently it is Brodsworth Hall in Yorkshire. Opened to the public just two years ago, Brodsworth is preserved as a time capsule of a mid-Victorian "upstairs downstairs" household, complete with all the period furniture and fittings. It won its accolade last week in the NPI National Heritage Awards, after a nationwide poll of visitors to stately homes.

**THEATRE:** An old London music-hall will be pressed into thespian service for the first time in more than a hundred years this month, when Fiona Shaw performs T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*. Shaw's twice-nightly run, opening on December 14, will be at Wilton's Music Hall near Tower Bridge in London. Built in 1859 and last used for public performances in 1880, it is claimed as the world's oldest surviving music-hall. Directed by Deborah Warner, the 37-minute production has already been seen in New York, Canada, Paris, Brussels and Cork.

**MUSIC:** The 10-year-old model Sophie Dahl will star in a new musical version of one of her grandfather's stories, Roald Dahl's *Goldilocks* has been set to music by the Austrian composer Kurt Schwertsik, and will be premiered by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra at the Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow on December 18. Sophie plays Goldilocks. It will be the Roald Dahl Foundation's fourth musical commission. The next will be an opera, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, to be premiered by Los Angeles Opera next December.

**POP:** Lou Reed's "perfect day" continues. With his refurbished song topping the charts, courtesy of the BBC's Children in Need appeal and an all-star cast, the Velvet Underground veteran has signed a new record deal with Reprise, and written the music for Robert Wilson's new pop opera *Time Rocker*.

**COMEDY:** Flushed with the success of *Popcorn*, the comedian and novelist Ben Elton has a new play in the pipeline. *Blast from the Past* will be a two-hander, to be mounted next year at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, in a production by Jude Kelly. If it works, expect to see it transfer to the West End some time next autumn.

**MUSICALS:** It's a big month for Stephen Sondheim fans: nothing less than the world premiere of his first musical opens on December 11... at the tiny Bridewell Theatre in London. *Saturday Night* was written by the 22-year-old Sondheim in 1952 — six years before his work on *West Side Story* catapulted him to fame. The producer died before the piece could be performed in New York, and it sat in Sondheim's "bottom drawer" until two years ago, when a workshop performance of two of its songs at the Bridewell aroused curiosity. Sondheim, who is coming over for the previews, has not revised the work at all, preferring it to stand or fall on its original merits.

Why do the pop charts go silly at Christmas?

Paul Sexton looks at a very British tradition

**W**hen the Martians land and start their field survey into the habits of the British record-buying public, let us hope for the sake of our fraying credibility that they do not get their clipboards out during December. Once again, on the singles scene, 'tis the season to be jolly silly, when punters walk open-mouthed and open-walled through a winter wonderland of Christmas carolers.

Better hold those stories about the vibrant creativity of Britpop until the new year. For the next four weeks, our charts will have slightly less sophistication than the average chimpazee's tea party — especially since we are now officially in the commercial stranglehold of those youthful recording discoveries Po, Laa-Laa, Tinky Winky and Dipsy.

*Teletubbies Say "Eh-Oh!"*

The debut single by the "preschool" television tykes, was released this week by BBC Worldwide. With reported pre-sales of 400,000 copies, it looks a cast-iron bet to be top of the charts next Sunday. But this still would not guarantee the portly infants the much-prized Christmas No 1 spot, since another obligatory purchase, yet more emotive, lurks around the next corner. The Chicken Shed theatre company's *I Am In Love With The World*, the sole single release from the *Diana, Princess of Wales: Tribute* album, is released by Columbia on December 15 and seems certain to be swept to the summit.

Either way, records with such powerful emotional appeal have been enough to see off *Oasis*, whose *All Around The World* single is now not due for release until the new year. Bowing to a song associated with the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund is one thing. But imagine the humiliation for the Gallagher brothers of being outshined by a group of actors in Day-Glo body suits with television screens in their stomachs.



Chart-toppers in the best British yuletide tradition? Po, Laa-Laa, Tinky Winky and Dipsy — aka the Teletubbies — strut their seasonal stuff

William Hill now takes about £100,000 in bets on the festive No 1. "When we started doing it 15 years ago," says Graham Sharpe for the company, "we took about £500. Now it's the equivalent of a nice little horse race."

But wait. Who is this coming up strong on the inside? Maureen Rees, of "world's worst driver" fame on the BBC's *Driving School* series, has remade Madness's 1982 hit *Driving In My Car*, and enters the race next Monday on ARC/Eagle Records. "I have got my eyes on the road," she says, and with estimated retail orders of 100,000, she's not

alone. But if the Chicken Shed troupe does outlast the competition, punters will effectively be betting on the Christmas No 2. Aware of the record's delicate nature, William Hill is excluding it from the betting, as it did last year with the Dumbard memorial single *Knocking On Heaven's Door*. "If the Chicken Shed record does get to No 1, we'll pay out on the No 2," says Sharpe. "If we didn't exclude it, someone would accuse us of making

money out of Diana's memory." Thus in the list of runners, Teletubbies stands at 8/13 favourite, with the Spice Girls' *Too Much* (also due on December 15) at 13-8.

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**GREAT BRITISH HOPES**  
Rising stars in the arts firmament:  
**EDWARD BURROWES**

Age 12.

Voice of Britten: Head chorister at St Paul's Cathedral School, he beat off 100 rivals to win the part of Miles, the doomed boy, in the recent Royal Opera production of *The Turn of the Screw*. He's back with Britten on Saturday at the Festival Hall, singing *Balulalow*, the fourth movement of *A Ceremony of Carols*, as part of the BBC Concert Orchestra's "Family Christmas Crackers" concert.

How did his opera debut go? Under Deborah Warner's direction his Barbican performances were frighteningly mature — despite his nerves. "The pressure of acting and singing in opera was totally different from performing solos in St Paul's. I was quite relieved that the on-stage lighting meant I couldn't see the audience."

Ambition? To go back to Covent Garden as a tenor and sing Peter Quint. *The Turn of the Screw's* ghostly servant. "If all opera is as exciting as the Britten, I'd love to have a career in it."

Three of a kind: His elder brother, Connor, 14, left St Paul's in 1996, his younger brother, Patrick, 10, has been there since 1994 — the first time a sibling trio has overlapped



at the school. "Connor's voice hasn't broken yet, so with luck I've got two more years as a treble."

Are the choristers competitive? "We all know exactly how many solos each of us has sung in the cathedral." Things are apparently a bit more relaxed in the boarders' common room, where the boys sing along to the Spice Girls.

Any other achievements? He opens the batting and bowling for the school's First XI. Personal bests to date are 43 not out — against Westminster Abbey — and 5 for 2. "We usually bowl the opposition out for about 10, so we have to bat first or else the game's over in 20 minutes."

A century against Australia at Lord's or a Covent Garden triumph as Quint? "It's got to be the century, because without any real talent as a cricketer I know that is going to remain a dream."

DANIEL ROSENTHAL

# Small but perfectly marketed

Can a children's classic fight the might of Disney at the cinema? Sheila Johnston on the battle for young filmgoers

**P**arents scanning the family films on offer this Christmas face a sparse line-up. There is *Home Alone 3*, minus Macaulay Culkin, who steered the first two movies to success (they remain high on the list of all-time top box-office grossers) but who is now too old for the role. *George of the Jungle*, a Tarzan spoof from Disney; *Prince Valiant*, an Anglo-Irish-German animated feature; *Spice World The Movie*; and *The Borrowers*, a \$30 million film based on Mary Norton's much-loved books about a family of tiny scavengers.

Of these, *The Borrowers* (which opens on Friday and will be reviewed tomorrow) is the only picture with a chance of mustering much enthusiasm from critics and parents. However, it differs significantly from the recent BBC series, notably in the addition of a baddie, John Goodman, the American star of *Roseanne* and *The Flintstones*, whose semi-sadistic frustration and humiliation (electrocution, burning and near-death by 400 gallons of cream cheese are involved) form the core of the plotline.

The producer is Tim Bevan of Working Title, the company behind both the film and television versions of Norton's stories. "We needed something simple in order for it to work on the big screen, and the idea was to create a chase that would carry us through the film," he explains. "We needed a typical movie-type villain. People want to be surprised, but not surprised — you have to convince parents that it's going to be OK. It's very difficult to compete with Disney, especially in America. They've got a cartel on family films."

Other executives agree. Ian George, the director of marketing for Warner Brothers Distributors, says: "In an industry where brand names mean nothing — no one goes along to a Warner film or a Paramount film — Disney is the closest you can get." Disney has been fiercely protective of its monopoly, especially in the field of animation, which other studios such as Fox, Warner Brothers and Steven Spielberg's DreamWorks are hoping to challenge with animated features of their own over the next year. Fox's cartoon fairytale *Anastasia* has been at the centre of a battle royal in the UK, where it opened last month against an arsenal of Disney releases programmed, allegedly, to crush it.

The Disney name is incredibly powerful and well-protected, comments Daniel Batssek, the vice-president and managing director of the world market.



For its big screen debut *The Borrowers* has scaled up the thrills with the addition of a classic baddie — but will it still be small beer?

ket," says Bevan. "We're actively looking for more projects with decent ideas and characters. But people are not writing those sorts of scripts."

But the family film market continues to expand. According to research from the advertising agency Leo Burnett, going to the cinema

— in contrast to other popular children's leisure activities like watching television — has not been hit by the rise of home computers. On the contrary, attendance by children aged between seven and 14 has grown by 23 per cent in the past ten years — the cinema remains a popular birthday outing.

Unlike adult movies, which generally mop up 25 per cent of their total box office on the opening weekend, George says children's films often do slow-burn business. But the multiplexes can programme them in matinee slots for weeks on end. And, Bevan adds, the ancillary possibilities are "huge" — meaning the extended afterlife they enjoy through television and video sales, merchandising and franchising. It is a market that may feel British producers are foolish to ignore. As Bentley says: "The economics are in place; now we are just waiting for the right movies."

**CLASSICAL MUSIC:** John Allison meets an extraordinary pair of percussionists on the way to their Wigmore Hall debut. Plus opera and concert reviews

## Denmark's breathless dynamic duo

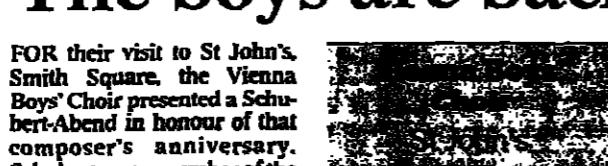
**T**he Safri Duo defies easy definition. Just as it is difficult to tell from their seamlessly integrated performances where one player ends and the other takes over, it is hard to know exactly when their double-act began. Officially, it was with the launch of the Morten Friis-Uffe Sæveri Percussion Duo almost ten years ago, but the two young Danes had been playing music together since childhood. And their more streamlined, composite name reflects the musical telepathy they have developed in their mid to late twenties.

"Yes, the name fits well, we are like a tandem," says Sæveri. "That's right," agrees Friis. "We're like twins."

Conversation with the Safris reveals the human phenomenon behind a musical phenomenon. The talk is almost continuous, with one picking up where the other leaves off, each supplying the missing words that the other cannot muster in English. Sæveri appears to be the driving force, but when the more spontaneous Friis warms to the discussion, he injects a note of deadpan Danish humour.

No amount of rehearsal can explain the chemistry of their performances. Whether on a pair of marimbas or spread over a dozen or more percussion instruments, they play as one. There is a virtuosity about their act that takes the breath away, but even more exciting is the sheer musicality that shows how far percussion has come as a medium. In their arrangements for two marimbas of Bach's parts interweaving with absolute clarity, and Chopin, full of subtle inflection, the Safris play in a way that few keyboard players can match, and with a cool fluidity that is beguiling.

The boys are back in town



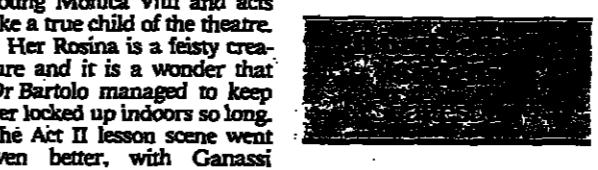
FOR their visit to St John's, Smith Square, the Vienna Boys' Choir presented a Schubert-Abend in honour of that composer's anniversary. Schubert was a member of the choir, which is about to celebrate its quincentennial — it was founded in 1498 by Maximilian I — and the singing tradition has been more or less unbroken. This may account for the distinctive sound of the choir — sweeter than King's College, Cambridge, more fragile than Westminster Cathedral, but purer than the Escolania of Montserrat — which at its best is quite heavenly.

The boys were at their best in the two Psalm-settings that opened the programme and the soloist John Hancorn was appropriately ardent in Schu-

bert's atmospheric evocation of the synagogue. The blend of salon elegance and reverence in the setting of the Mass No 2 in G, and in that of the *Tantum ergo* in E flat which opened the second half of the concert, always makes me feel slightly uneasy, but would undoubtedly have been expected by the Viennese churchgoers of the day. The creamy sound of the boys *en masse* and of the unnamed treble soloist brought out the saccharine qualities of the music. Nevertheless, it is always good to hear the Vienna boys: long may they continue to withstand sexual equality.

TESS KNIGHTON

## Method in the mania



one another, as this second cast does. Lowry operates on the old music-hall principle of always having another joke ready on the runway in case the first one fails to take off. He is his own designer so most of the gags are visual and demand funny performers.

Peter Rose's Basilio precisely fits this bill. With fine booming bass he substitutes a round and corrupt *maître d'* from an upmarket restaurant for the usual steady music master. William Dazley in

the title role overrid *Largo al factotum*, sung full blast while getting into his trousers. He then settled down to the quick-witted and resourceful performance one expects from him.

Bruce Ford, singing his *hundredth*, *Almaviva*, took time to settle into the mayhem and was not helped by having to guy his *Act I canzone*. By

Act II he was part of the team and back to form. Eric Garrett's Bartolo is too amiable an old body and the role needs more than mere veteran status. The juggler brought in to illustrate the storm sequence could also be pensioned off.

A pity too that Bruno Campanella was not there to conduct. Antonella Allemandi's handling of the orchestra was dangerously lacking in fizz. Even so the Shafesbury's staff should not subject him to noisy punters taking their seats during the overture. Make them wait outside, especially as Act I is 90 minutes. They might be punctual next time.

JOHN HIGGINS

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**LONDON**  
CIRKUS WITH FLICKS: *Jackie* Cline's impressive (and doleous) camp musical tribute to the disco discs of the 1970s. Her impersonation of Karen Carpenter is a solo tour de force. *100 West, Upper Street, N1 (0171-226 1916)*. Opera tonight, 8pm. Then: Tues-Thur, 8pm. Fri and Sat, 7pm and 8pm. Sun, 7pm. Until January 4. **THE SPANISH TRAGEDY**: Thomas Kyd's celebrated but unfriendly revenge tragedy, an inspiration for Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Sodan Richmond and Peter Wright in Michael Boyd's praised production from *Shakespeare's Globe*. *Shakespeare's Globe, Bankside, SE1 (0171-974 0818)*. Opera tonight, 8pm. Then: Tues-Thur, 8pm. Fri and Sat, 7pm and 8pm. Sun, 7pm. Until January 4. **THE PINEAPPLE FESTIVAL**: For the final concert in this series, Gennaro Racheleveddy conducts the London Philharmonic Orchestra and soloists from the Kirov Opera Company in a series of three performances. On Sat, the programme is *Five Poems*, Op 23, *Violin Concerto No 2*, and a concert performance of the opera *Macbeth*. With Valentina Lopatkina. *St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, WC2 (0171-920 4240)*. Tonight, 7.30pm. **VOICES AT THE WIGMORE**: Two excellent young singers can be heard in two separate programmes this week. At 7pm on Fri, *Clare's Songs of the World*. Caroline Christopher Malmsten accompanied on piano by Malcolm Martineau, performing French romantic songs by Faure, Debussy and Ravel. At 8pm the acclaimed tenor Ian Bostridge offers an Austrian counterpart in a programme of Schubert's song cycle *Wandmärchen*. Schubert's song cycle *Wandmärchen*. Ian Bostridge performs on the piano. *Wigmore Hall, Wigmore Street, W1 (0171-935 2141)*.

#### TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Marit Hargreave

#### ELSEWHERE

**BRIGHTON**: A two-night stop here for the *Antique and Decayed*, the tale of a man and his first wife Ulfh, Rebecca Wohman directs Simon Thorpe and Emma Cutler in a production in a style where Joseph Kestner meets *Hamlet*. *Pavilion, 29 New Road (01273 709709)*. Tonight and tomorrow, 8pm. **HORSHAM**: The complete footwork of the *Medieval Dance Project* can be savoured for a first two



Prokofiev is celebrated on the South Bank

#### THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London

■ Seats full, returns only

■ Some seats available

■ Seats at all prices

performances as the company's summer tour comes to an end here with two shows, each inspired by a French artist. *Horsham Arts Centre, North Street (01403 268669)*. Tonight and tomorrow, 8pm.

**LIVERPOOL**: Joseph Liverpool's *Principia* continues its tour with a Northern programme looking off at Greece's popular *Holberg Suite* followed by works by Steenhammar and Stokkaus. With Malcolm Martineau. *Woolton Phoenix Hall, High Street (0151-709 3789)*. Tonight, 7.30pm.

**POOLE**: The Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra under Dennis Kania performs a programme with a strong polish flavour, coupling *Stabat Mater* with *Concerto Finlandia* with Shostakovich's *Symphony No 5*, subtitled "A Soviet artist's practical way to criticism". Also on the bill: *Concerto for Double Concerto* with Jonathan Correy, violin, and Timothy Walker, cello. *Wessex Hall, Poole Arts Centre, 100 Victoria Road (01202 685322)*. Tonight, 7.30pm. £6.

**LONDON GALLERIES**

**Barbican**: Don McCullin: *Sleeping with Ghosts* (0171-638 8891). Tues-Sun, 10am-5pm. **British** (0171-323 8529): *Mass Royal Institute of Oil Painters* (0171-923 6844). **National**: Hogarth's *Manage Ala Mode* (0171-747 2825). **Wellcome**: *Memory Project* (1756-1823) (0171-306 0059). **Royal** (0171-823 2022): *Victorian Fairy Painting* (0171-439 4388). *Serpentine*: *Piano Manonz* (0171-402 2800). *Science*: *Bottoms Up* (0171-987 2000). **V & A**: *Car and Kart* (0171-938 634411). **Whitworth**: *Lines from Brazil*.

# Patchy outing for Büchner's misfit

Farce fit for ripe old age

ALTHOUGH written in 1761, this may not be the earliest English farce. But it manages to be the one of its era that still works today, without the deadly addition of chases and syncopated servants that some directors have introduced in an attempt to animate 18th-century dodos.

The piece was revived to open the present Orange Tree six years ago, when the cast were dressed in period costume and cherubs hung in the air. This time we seem to be in the 1960s, an era that suits the multiple misunderstandings unexpectedly well. I don't remember seeing sedan chairs whizz through Hyde Park in those days but it wouldn't have surprised me if freakier members of the upper classes had brought them out from

#### All in the same boat

Orange Tree



Janet Henfrey as the king, Sarah Theresa Belcher as Lena in the Gate's Büchner

**I**magine a mix of Hamlet, Holden Caulfield and Eeyore, and you have the peculiarly irritating personality of the hero of Büchner's least-known play. Prince Leonce is the sort of chap who is always saying things like "My life is an endless piece of parchment which I must fill" or, while tying and failing to hang himself, "Oh sweet night, hanish me to your black bosom". And when he meets a really pretty girl, what is his greeting? "Our life is but a slow creeping fever," that's what.

Büchner wrote *Danton's Death* in 1835, when he was 21, and was reworking *Woyzeck* when he died two years later.

#### Leonce and Lena

Gate, W11

Both are amazingly mature, confident, serious works. But *Leonce and Lena*, which he composed between them, has long worried the critics. Sometimes it seems, well, silly. Often it comes across as the play of a young man still finding his voice and his feet. It is a satire, yes; but what, and whom is Büchner satirising?

In part, that is easy to answer. His target is Leonce's bleating father and the rest of the decrepit crew that run the kingdom of Popo or, in Lee Hall's spirited and sometimes raunchy translation, Bottom. At the Gate the king is played by Janet Henfrey with a persistently loose moustache and his court by performers looking like crosses between Neville Chamberlain and Tweedledee. Leonce's scorn for them is also Büchner's — and that of many young radicals living in the long, twisted shadow of the French Revolution.

It is Leonce who is the problem. One moment he is the principled rebel, throwing off sloth and convention in hopes of forging a brave new identity for himself, and the next he is lost in morbid late-adolescent reverie. Is he a sympathetic expression of Büchner's own ermit, or a parody of Romantic self-absorption, or both? That we are never sure might not matter.

Indeed, it might present an interestingly contradictory play. Sadly, that is not the effect left by the revival that brings the Gate's Büchner season to a close.

The challenge is to find the right tone for a piece that is not only a cringy spoof of traditionalism but a moral fairytale.

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Leonce runs from his arranged marriage to Lena, Princess Piddle, at the same moment that she is running

from him. Inevitably, they meet and fall in love. Intrigued and charmed by his unorthodox courtship ("you exquisite corpse!"), she ends up marrying him — although whether this is good news for the much-abused people of Bottom is highly uncertain.

I doubt if any director could combine these unwieldy ingredients into a witty, telling whole. David Farr, having lumbered himself with a toy-theatre style and an inconsistent cast, does not do so.

Christopher Staines is an attractive and sometimes amusing Leonce; Sarah Theresa Belcher makes an appealing Lena; but some others are living way beyond their means as comic performers.

Even with the insertion of the odd enjoyable song, it is all too ramshackle and shambolic to "convince anybody that Büchner wrote more than two memorable plays."

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

## Twisted tragedy in the desert

**F**riday nights in Texas don't come much more inbred and redneck than sucking *Long Star* beer from a crate of bottles outside Ray's garage. Here, on a beaten-up car seat ripped out of some wreck, older brother Ray holds court, his gut easing over his new jeans, his Vietnam military tag hanging around his neck like a gold chain.

"War made me man," slurs Roy, fixing Ray with a manic, Dennis Hopper-like stare before throwing himself on the ground to show Ray his old jungle manoeuvres. He looks ridiculous. Ray humours his brother, even though he has witnessed the scenario a million times. That's as cheeky as Ray is allowed to get. Roy is the local hicksville hero, and besides, he has the 1959 pink T-bird convertible to prove it.

The fascination of James McAvoy's short

three-hander is how it wrestles us down to the level of its unlovable male characters. With drunken cowboy talk and fat emotional country and western pauses, the cast — all prominent members of *The Bill* — generate that uneasy, banal atmosphere of potential violence and stale comradeship. Mark Wingert's accent may grate from Texas to SE17, but he puts in a compellingly repulsive performance as Roy, neatly counterpointed by Huw Higginson's slow-witted Ray who, despite the hero worship, cannot erase the suspicion that his brother is all blust and no balls. Tom Butcher's Clevis, Ray's friend and a shopkeeper,

provides light relief and another target for Roy until we learn that he has wrapped Roy's convertible around the only standing tree in a hundred square miles. Clevis too wanted to be a hero but has ended up as an all-too-rental Baptist.

McAvoy poses no deep questions, nor does he contrive to give any deep answers. What you gradually realise about the surface tension of his play is the eloquent vacuum behind it. This small desert tragedy is sweetly twisted around the fact that his hero is a walking, talking, howling cliché because that's the only way Roy can deal with life. Maybe Vietnam did this to him. Maybe his parents did. All that we can be certain of is that Roy's life is as hollow as the ten-gallon hat on his two-pint head.

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

Christopher Staines is an attractive and sometimes amusing Leonce; Sarah Theresa Belcher makes an appealing Lena; but some others are living way beyond their means as comic performers.

Even with the insertion of the odd enjoyable song, it is all too ramshackle and shambolic to "convince anybody that Büchner wrote more than two memorable plays."

The portrait passes from hand to hand, generating more misunderstanding: lovers make up and break up. The best scenes are those when two people talk at cross purposes, where Murphy manages to sustain a conversation — for some time, Ayrshire-fashion, without allowing a character to make clear the pronouns that are causing the trouble.

Elder's expression, when bewitched, looks like an evicted potato but the character eventually shows there is some meat to him. Joanne Mitchell makes Belinda's 1760 dialogue convincingly 1960, pointing to the character's amused view of her lover's absurdity. Paul Shelley's Sir John, pacing, striding and unconvincingly by truth, energises the action and, though there are slow areas in the play, when the fun comes it is furiously funny.

JEREMY KINGSTON

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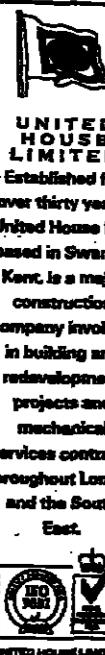
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For an information pack please contact the Human Resources Department, Royal Brompton Hospital, tel: 0171 351 8588 (24 hour answering machine). Please quote the appropriate reference. Separate applications for each post will be required. Closing date: Friday 12 December.

If you are aged between 25 and 40 and want to work together in an exciting environment with a possible long term ambition to own your own hotel or restaurant, there could be better opportunity. We will provide you with the support of, and training in, a proven formula, giving you the scope to stamp your own personality and management style on the running of your 'crash'.

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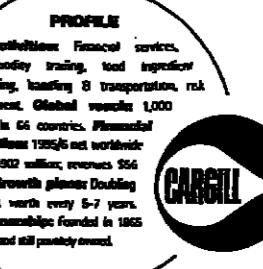
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Just load a document, press Control-H or choose Edit/Replace, then click on the More button, and a list of extra features will pop up. You can find and replace fonts, paragraphs, languages, frames, tabs, styles and highlights.

You could highlight a sentence that needs checking, to remind yourself not to publish or print it without doing so. Then you could use Find and Replace to find highlighted text, remove the highlighting and make any necessary changes.

Here is a seasonal tip. If you want to know how many shopping days there are until Christmas, run Excel and type = "25/12/97" - "03/12/97" (you should get 23 as the answer). Don't forget the quotation marks, or the equals sign. You can use it to calculate the time to go to any date.

CHRIS WARD

For those who are unhappy with their jobs, this is the season to start looking around, says Susan MacDonald

# Moving experience for secretaries

**A** good secretary is hard to find — and come the new year will become even harder. Why? Because, many secretaries get that new year.

Traditionally this is the time when they collect their bonuses and wave goodbye to their bosses. The resulting vacancies means it is also a good time for secretaries thinking of making a move to put out feelers.

Joslin Rowe, the City recruitment consultants, decided to court the type of secretaries they need on their books by holding an open evening last week in their City offices, with drinks and snacks and a presentation from an image consultant.

The idea was that secretaries could come along after office hours to chat about their jobs as well as finding out what was on offer. For some it was a chance to express in confidence their dissatisfaction with the job they were doing to people who might be in a position to find them a better one. Others were already on the consultancy's books and this was a chance to meet the people they dealt with in a relaxed atmosphere.

Those who were unhappy in their jobs were understandably unwilling to give their names. One woman was desperate to change from one job to another but wanted to stay in the City. Her skills, she said, were going to pot while she spent her days running trivial errands for her

grumpy boss. "It is important to be in the right job because so much of our life is spent in the office. I was hooked on the prestige of a top job but after this experience I realise that it's more important to be working in the right atmosphere with a positive bunch of people," she said.

Another woman worked for a company which was relocating and she did not want to move with them. She was looking for a job in London's Docklands, which is becoming increasingly popular with finance houses, because she loved the atmosphere there.

Two others wanted to exchange their City jobs for one in London's West End. They hated what they called the City's hostile banking environment. "We want something a bit more creative, with colleagues who actually say good morning to you," said one.

Karen Burge, Melissa McRae, Kylie Smith and Sara Knight, all high-flying temps, exchanged information on their jobs. All were happy in what they were doing but wanted to meet Joslin Rowe's staff. Their jobs were typical of those available in City finance sector. Working for a bank, a temp, can earn between £9.50 and £10 an hour (though they get no benefits).

Ms Burge, 24, had been working for RGB underwriters for just one

week and was not sure how long the job would last. Ms McRae, 27, arrived from New Zealand in April and is an administrative assistant with the Royal Bank of Canada, in the electronic banking and cash management Europe department. Ms Smith, 22, works in the auction department of Sedgwick Oakwood, Lloyds underwriting agents. Ms

Knight, 35, is filling in for someone on maternity leave in names administration in the same firm. With the confidence that Australians often seem born with, Ms Smith made it seem that getting a top job was a piece of cake. "I arrived in England in April, walked in to Joslin Rowe in the summer and landed my job within two weeks," she said.

Sharon Keane was introduced as the consultancy's "star pupil". She had recently taken the plunge and resigned from her job in a large US finance house in the City after "five years of misery", she said. "Resigning has changed my life. Before, I was always negative and depressed — ask my husband. Now I feel on top of the world."

Ms Keane, 29, is doing temporary work now and will only go permanent again if the job of her dreams comes along. "I have been working at J P Morgan for the past ten days. Next week it will be a new office and

new everything. If you are a professional secretary who can walk in and pick up the threads with no difficulty you are really appreciated," she said.

Why is she a star? Perhaps because she is assertive. She listed her good points as being cheerful, honest, relaxed, open to suggestions, having excellent skills and a vast experience in the City.

Wendy Clark of CMB Image Consultants offered advice on office dress, hairstyles and make-up. "Your choice of clothes should reflect the image of your company," she said. "Keep accessories to a minimum, don't go for an unprofessional hairstyle. Research shows that women who don't wear make-up are not noticed as much as those who do — but use it sparingly."

These professional secretaries had little to learn about image, although one sportingly volunteered to be analysed by Ms Clark. "Because you are petite you should shorten your skirt slightly and a bright red shirt would look better with that jacket, considering your colouring."

It was like water off a duck's back. "I wear blue most of the time," she said, as the woman alongside her nodded in agreement. "Would your friend like some advice, too?" Ms Clark asked. "She's my boss," came the answer. And that sums up the radical changes in office life.



High-flying temps: from left, Karen Burge, Melissa McRae, Kylie Smith and Sara Knight

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## When cause against valuer arises

Nykredit Mortgage Bank plc v Edward Erdman Group Ltd (No 2) Before Lord Goff of Chieveley, Lord Jauncey of Tullichettle, Lord Styan of Hadley, Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead and Lord Hoffmann (Speeches November 27)

A lender's cause of action on a claim against a valuer for damages in respect of a negligent valuation arose when a relevant and measurable loss was first recorded.

Order 42, rule 3 of the Rules of the Supreme Court gave a court no power to backdate an order for costs to the date on which judgment had been given in a lower court.

The House of Lords had inherent jurisdiction to award interest on damages and costs paid by the defendants to the plaintiffs pursuant to orders of the trial judge and the Court of Appeal and ordered the House of Lords on appeal to be repaid.

The House of Lords gave judgment following the recent hearing on the question of interest adjourned sine die in its judgment on appeal from *Banque Brussels Lambert SA v Eagle Star Insurance Co Ltd* (The Times June 24, 1996; [1997] AC 19).

Mr Simon Berry, QC and Mr Jonathan Ferris for the defendants, Edward Erdman Group Ltd; Mr Michael Briggs, QC and Mr David Blayney for the plaintiffs, Nykredit Mortgage Bank plc.

LORD NICHOLLS said that in *Banque Brussels* the House had given judgment in the present and two other appeals concerning the measure of damages payable to lenders by valuers who had negligently overvalued property provided as security for loans.

## Move to restore jurisdiction lost by appeal tribunal

Practice Statement (Employment Appeal Tribunal: Jurisdiction)

Following the decision of the Employment Appeal Tribunal in *Pendragon plc v Jackson* (The Times November 12) that that tribunal did not have jurisdiction to hear appeals from decisions where the industrial tribunal's jurisdiction derived from the Industrial Tribunals Act 1996, namely complaints of damages for breach of contract, Mr Justice Morison, President of EAT, explained on November 24 the steps being taken to cope with the problem which the decision had caused in the context of proposals to rectify the legislation.

MR JUSTICE MORISON said that prior to the hearing of the *Pendragon* appeal there had been

inserted into the Employment Rights (Dispute Resolution) Bill, a clause giving back to the EAT the jurisdiction it previously had and making the changes retrospective. Statutory jurisdiction was likely to be restored in April 1998.

Until corrective legislation had been enacted no breach of contract appeals would be listed for hearing.

It did not follow that in every case where a breach of contract had been alleged that the EAT did not have jurisdiction.

Jurisdiction to hear appeals against decisions relating to constructive dismissal remained intact as it did in relation to decisions dealing with unlawful deduction from wages. Further, an appeal would lie against a decision which dealt with a breach of

contract claim where the appeal did not concern that issue.

Where an appeal related to more than one head of complaint, for example, unfair dismissal coupled with a claim for damages for wrongful dismissal, the appeal would have to be postponed.

During the *Pendragon* case counsel had raised the possibility of an appeal to the High Court as an interim measure. It was not necessary to say whether such an appeal could be made but it was expected that any such appeals would take more than a year to come on for hearing.

It was hoped that the jurisdiction problem would have been put right before any appeal could be heard by any other route.

Queries by parties could be raised with the EAT listing office.

Law Report December 3 1997

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 3 1997

## Courts-Martial Appeal Court

## Sentencing in the military context

The first step was to identify the relevant measure of loss.

Typically, in the case of a negligent valuation of an intended loan security, the basic comparison called for was between the amount lent by the plaintiff, which he would still have had in the absence of the loan transaction, plus interest at a proper rate, and the value of the rights acquired, namely the borrower's covenant and the true value of the overvalued property.

However, a valuer was not liable for all the consequences that followed from the lender entering into the transaction. He was liable only for the consequences attributable to the deficiency in the security.

The defendants claimed that their cause of action had arisen in March 1990, at the date of the loan transaction, when they had suffered an immediate loss. The defendants contended that it had not arisen until the property had been sold in February 1993, when the plaintiffs had been visited with the consequence of the valuation being wrong.

The cause of action in cases in tort arose when the plaintiff first sustained damage. Thus the question was what was meant by "damage" in the context of claims for loss that were purely financial or economic.

In *Forster v Oured & Co* [1982] 1 WLR 35, 94 Lord Justice Stephen accepted the submission of Mr Stuart-Smith, QC: "What is meant by actual damage? ... that it is any detriment, liability or loss capable of assessment in money terms. There has to be some actual damage." His Lordship agreed, adding only that the loss had to be relevant, falling within the measure of damage applicable to the valuer by valuers who had negligently overvalued property provided as security for loans?

When, then, did the lender first sustain measurable, relevant loss?

In the present case the borrower's covenant had been worthless. The borrower had defaulted at once, and the amount lent, £2.45 million, had at all times exceeded the true value of the property, £2.1 million.

Thus the cause of action had arisen at the time of the transaction or thereabouts. By December 1990 the plaintiffs had sustained their full allowable loss of £1.4 million plus interest at a proper rate, and the value of the rights acquired, namely the borrower's covenant and the true value of the overvalued property.

However, a valuer was not liable for all the consequences that followed from the lender entering into the transaction. He was liable only for the consequences attributable to the deficiency in the security.

The defendants sought interest in respect of those costs from the date on which judgment had been given in the Court of Appeal. They sought an order similar to the backdated order that the Court of Appeal had approved in *Kuwait Airways Corporation v Iraqi Airways Co (No 2)* [1994] 1 WLR 985.

In that case the Court of Appeal, which had founded its jurisdiction in Order 42, rule 3 of the Rules of the Supreme Court, had been given a somewhat hybrid jurisdiction.

It was clear the Parliament intended that any injustice in a court-martial sentence should be corrected but the court also had to assess the seriousness of the offending in the context of service life and the need to maintain the discipline and efficiency of the Armed Forces.

The Courts-Martial Appeal Court so held in allowing an appeal by Sgt Colin Gilbert, Royal Military Police, against a sentence imposed on June 6, 1997, at a District Court-Martial held at Shoreham (Assistant Judge Advocate-General Pearson) on the plea of guilty to two charges of sexual indecent assault occasioned through the post, contrary to section 1(2) of the Post Office Act 1962. He had been dismissed from the Royal Mail Service and reduced to the ranks until April 1997.

In his substantive judgment, the House had ordered the plaintiff to pay, inter alia, the costs incurred by the defendants.

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BROWN, giving the judgment of the court, said there were certain observations to be made about this new right of appeal and what should be the court's approach to it.

In considering appeals against sentence under section 17 of the Armed Forces Act 1996, which amends section 8 of the Courts-Martial Appeals Act 1964, the Courts-Martial Appeal Court was examining a somewhat hybrid jurisdiction.

It was clear the Parliament intended that any injustice in a court-martial sentence should be corrected in a court-martial sentence, it was nevertheless necessary to be mindful that those imposing and confirming such a sentence were generally speaking, better placed than their Lordships to assess the seriousness of offence.

Listed in order of gravity, they were as follows:

1. Imprisonment in a civilian prison.

2. Dismissal with disgrace from her Majesty's Service.

3. Dismissal from her Majesty's Service.

4. Detention in a corrective training centre for a period not exceeding two years.

5. Reduction in rank.

6. Severe reprimand or reprimand.

7. Such minor punishments as might from time to time be authorised by the Defence Council.

Second, court-martial sentences were concerned at one and the same time to achieve two things: first, to punish service personnel for the criminality of their conduct, and second to deal with them on a disciplinary basis. That was the case.

Mr Gordon Babb for the appellant.

LORD JUSTICE SIMON

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# Why Prince Harry of Highbury deserted the Royals

The gentrification of football can go no further. Last weekend, Prince Harry was snapped, a face in the crowd at the Arsenal. And, as a thrilling battle for the Championship runners-up slot heated up (and Arsenal went down 1-0 to Liverpool thanks to a goal from the princely Steve McManaman), the princeling Harry shouldered the lads on from beneath his woolly Arsenal hat.

And, unless the Queen turns up to open Parliament in an Arsenal shirt bearing the motto *Dieu et mon droit* — which I believe translates as “God and My Wright” — we can surely celebrate football’s ultimate social achievement: God for Harry, England and the Arsenal.

What, we must ask ourselves, does all this mean? First and obviously, if you want to watch

Premiership football, it is not essential to be of royal blood and royal income, but it certainly helps. Secondly, it is with some relief that one observes that the thoughtful and discriminating prince has chosen a comparatively obscure team to support.

I mean, thank the Lord, it is not Manchester United he went for. (Before I continue, let me add that United are indeed playing great football, a treat to watch, and their European adventure has been stunningly assured. Will the usual half-baked, knee-jerk, purblind, one-likes-us-and-we-really-really-care United loyalists for once save their stamps?)

**He has rejected the chance of supporting Reading**

My godson is a Manchester United supporter and he lives in Penryn in Cornwall, which is as far from Manchester as you can get without emigrating. He is inclined to triumphalism over his father, a Spurs man who used to live off the Seven Sisters Road and cheered standing up.

My godson scorns the charms of Falmouth Town and Plymouth Argyle, just as Prince Harry rejected the chance of supporting Reading. What local loyalty compared with glory and the regular opportunity to see the lads on telly?

Ah, glory! Surely, if you pay all that money to watch a Premiership football team in the flesh, you have

## FOOTBALL

# Saunders happy to move as Forest cut their wages bill

BY RICHARD HOBSON

DEAN SAUNDERS, the Wales forward, completed his move to Sheffield United yesterday after being allowed to leave Nottingham Forest on a free transfer. It says much for the extent to which Saunders fell from favour at the City Ground that Forest rejected a bid of £500,000 by Everton just three months ago, and the player could not resist a sideswipe at his former club.

He had been training with the reserves after failing to displace Pierre van Hooydonk or Kevin Campbell in the first team and Dave Bassett, the Forest manager, had no qualms in allowing him to join a side likely to be among their rivals for promotion to the FA Carling Premiership.

Saunders, joining the ninth club of his career on an 18-

month contract, said: “I have never been so unhappy than over the last year. The harder I tried, the worse it got. I have analysed the situation and a lot of the things that have happened have not been my fault.

I said to my wife that if you buy a Ferrari and use it in the garage you can understand how it loses its value. Last season I played right wing and right back, and this season I have hardly played at all. I had options to go to a Premier club but after speaking to Charles Green [the Sheffield United chief executive] I felt I was signing for Real Madrid.”

Saunders, 33, cost £1.5 million from Galatasaray, in Turkey, 18 months ago, but scored just three goals in 34

league games as Forest suffered relegation from the Premiership.

It is the second time in three weeks that Forest have been prepared to write off an expensive striker to trim their wages bill. Last month they terminated the contract of Andrea Silenzi, a £1.8 million arrival from Torino, with a payment of £150,000 to the player.

Martin O’Neill, the Leicester City manager, says he is losing interest in signing Trevor Sinclair because of speculation linking him with the Queens Park Rangers striker. He inquired about Sinclair when Stewart Houston was still the QPR manager, but O’Neill is adamant that no bid has been lodged.

Houston was sacked a few days after O’Neill’s inquiry and informed John Hollins, his replacement on a caretaker basis, of Leicester’s interest. According to O’Neill, however, there has been no contact between the clubs since.

“I do not know if Sinclair is available, what the asking price would be or whether we can afford his wages,” O’Neill said. “Stewart told me to submit a bid in writing if I was interested. I never bothered, and the situation at QPR changed.

“I have made general comments about the need to sign quality players, which have been turned into specific comments about Trevor Sinclair. It has reached the point where I am beginning to consider not considering the player at all.” O’Neill said that he was due to watch Sinclair against Norwich City in the Nationwide League first division tonight, but was having second thoughts.

He has £6 million available to spend after Leicester’s flotation, but believes he must amend his policy of signing untried players for the club to progress from the stage where avoiding relegation is considered sufficient achievement.

Although Sinclair, 24, has spent most of his career away from the top flight, he won seven England Under-21 caps and was called into the full squad under Terry Venables. QPR rejected a bid of £4 million from Tottenham Hotspur last year.

Hollins said: “As far as I know there has not been a bid for Sinclair this season. He is happy with us, so there is no point asking how much we want for him.”

George Graham yesterday became one of Britain’s highest-paid managers when he signed a new long-term deal with Leeds United, believed to be worth £1 million a year. The agreement puts Graham in the same pay bracket as Alex Ferguson, at Manchester United, Kenny Dalglish, at Newcastle United, and Roy Hodgson, of Blackburn Rovers.

Hollins said: “As far as I

know there has not been a bid for Sinclair this season. He is happy with us, so there is no point asking how much we want for him.”

The move also quashes speculation of a possible move to Rangers at the end of the season as successor to Walter Smith.



Coombs will not give up the day job unless a long, lucrative contract is offered by a Football League club

## Roundabout route to record

Russell Kempson on a non-league marksman with his sights on a notable achievement



goals in 21 matches this season since recovering from damaged medial ligaments in his right knee; his first goal in the Wycombe replay was his 150th for the club; he has since taken the total to 152 in 288 appearances — an average of 0.52 per game. Alan Shearer’s career average is 0.54.

Yet the big time has probably passed him by. He flitted with Queens Park Rangers as a schoolboy and joined and left Aldershot before the club folded. When he moved on to Farnborough Town, Stoke City and Sheffield United expressed no more than passing interest. In seven seasons with Basingstoke, few scouts have tried to negotiate the town of many roundabouts.

In football terms, I’m getting on a bit,” Coombs, a corporate account manager, said. “I enjoy what I do, I

make a good living working and playing semi-professionally and I have a very understanding wife and employers. It would need a really good package, including a long-term contract, to tempt me

possibly could have made it in the League. I have a few slight regrets. You need a certain amount of determination and a bit of luck to make the breakthrough and perhaps I didn’t have that.”

He has good memories, though, especially of when he played alongside Steve Clarke, now of Leicester City. In its 101-year existence, it has never reached the third round. Sadly, Steve liked a bet,” Coombs recalled. “Goodness knows how much he blew on the horses.” There are the not so good memories, too, when Farnborough met West Ham in the third round of the Cup. “It was the fourteenth man,” he said. “It was very frustrating.”

Basingstoke’s success has had its drawbacks. Though they are out of the Hampshire Senior Cup, they are still in the FA Cup, FA Umbro Tro

to football more in expectation than in hope. Tell me — is there still gallows humour in Premiership football? I remember a bottom-three six-pointer in the old first division, and Swindon Town’s opponents jeering: “Going down, going down. As one man, Swindon responded: “So are we, so we are, so we are.”

Fact you can run 20 plumbing

teams well and you will have 20 success stories. Another fact you can run 20 Premiership football teams well and there will still only be one champion, and there will still be three teams relegated. And you can also have 20 barons, but only one king. That is what the feudal system means. We cannot all be kings at the same time.

No, a real football person knows that there is more to football than winning. Like losing, for example. Glory is for wimpers.

**Southgate aims for return in Uefa Cup**  
By OUR SPORTS STAFF

GARETH SOUTHGATE, the Aston Villa central defender, who suffered an ankle injury playing for England against Cameroon at Wembley last month, hopes to be fit in time to play for Aston Villa in their Uefa Cup third-round second-leg tie with Steaua Bucharest next Tuesday.

It had been feared that Southgate, the Villa captain, would be ruled out until just before Christmas, but he said yesterday: “I don’t want to put myself under pressure and it’s difficult to look too far ahead, but I’m hoping to be ready for next Tuesday.”

“It is a question of playing things by ear and seeing how they go, but Tuesday is a realistic aim if all goes well. I am at the stage where I’m into doing full running now and I am not too far away. It’s a game I would dearly love to play in because the chance of reaching the quarter-finals in Europe is a big incentive.” Although he is unlikely to play against Coventry City in the FA Carling Premiership at the weekend, Southgate said: “I don’t think it is vital that I play before Tuesday because I will have only been out for three weeks. If you were talking eight or nine weeks, then it would naturally be a different matter.”

He insisted that he will only play if he is 100 per cent fit. By his own admission, he did not do himself justice when he attempted an early comeback from another ankle injury collected on England duty against Poland. “I tried to rush back last season and it caused me longer-term problems,” he said. “It did nobody — myself or the team — any favours.”

Juventus will be without at least four first-team regulars for their European Cup Champions League encounter with Manchester United in Turin next week. The Italian champions had already lost two strikers for the tie in group B — Alessandro Del Piero, through suspension, and Nicola Amoruso, with a leg fracture sustained at the weekend — but medical tests have now ruled out Didier Deschamps, the France midfield player, who badly sprained a right thigh muscle during the defeat last week to Feyenoord, and Gianluca Pessotto, the defender, who suffered a similar injury in the Serie A match against AC Milan on Sunday.

Juventus must beat United on December 10 if they are to have any chance of qualifying for one of two slots available in the quarter-finals for the best runners-up of the six groups. Borussia Dortmund won the world club championship with a convincing 2-0 win over Cruzeiro yesterday. Goals from Michael Zorc and Heiko Herrlich gave the European Cup-holders a well-deserved victory over Brazilian opponents, who reduced to ten men after Vitor, the right back, was sent off in the second half.

Zorc opened the scoring after 34 minutes when he drove in a cross from Stephane Chapuisat from the edge of the six-yard box. Herrlich added the second five minutes from the end, when he latched on to a low cross from Paulo Sousa.

Cruzeiro, who won their second Copa Libertadores this year, lost despite signing two Brazilian forwards — Bebeto, a World Cup-winner in the United States three years ago, and Domingo — on loan before the game. Dortmund, whose form in the German league has been disappointing this season despite impressing in the Champions’ League, then became the second German club, after Bayern Munich in 1976, to win the championship.

## McAllister cleared of serious injury

GARY McALLISTER, the Scotland captain, was yesterday able to look towards taking his place in the World Cup after a scan revealed that he has suffered no significant knee damage at the weekend.

It was thought that McAllister had suffered severe ligament damage after sustaining the injury in Coventry City’s game against Leicester City at Highfield Road on Saturday when his knee gave way when he landed after an aerial challenge.

However, Gordon Strachan, the Coventry manager, said: “Gary has the scan and there is nothing major wrong with him, which is good news for him and good news for us. He is still seeing a specialist and we have no idea as to how long he will be out of action.”

The news will be welcomed by Craig Brown, the Scotland coach, who sees McAllister, 33, as the linchpin of his challenge at the World Cup in France next summer.

Clubs in the Bell’s Scottish League, premier division warned their lower division

counterparts last night that next Tuesday will be their last chance to join the big clubs’ breakaway.

Tex Gold, the chairman of Hibernian, has presented a formal legal offer to clubs from the first, second and third divisions from the start of next season.

That is when the new top flight aims to be up and running and Gold has stressed the settlement presented is a non-negotiable final offer and, even if refused, progress will not be interrupted.

“It was stated at the last management committee meeting on November 27 that the main reason our request [to resign from the league] was not granted was the absence of a legal document formally setting out the package on offer,” Gold said. “We have now addressed that concern and made a formal legal offer and this is our final offer.”

If it is not accepted, it will be withdrawn and we will then consider how best to advance our own plans for establishing our new vision for Scottish football.”

## Redknapp backs Hartson to stay on target

HARRY REDKNAPP, the West Ham United manager, is backing John Hartson, the leading scorer in FA Carling Premiership, to keep delivering the goals — and avoid the dry spell that is afflicting Ian Wright, the Welshman’s former team-mate at Arsenal.

Redknapp jumped at the chance to sign Hartson near the end of last season when Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, made him available

at a time when Wright’s partnership with Dennis Bergkamp was producing goals galore.

Now Wright has hit a barren patch of six games, and Arsenal have not hit the target in five of their past six matches.

“I’m very positive about John,” Redknapp said. “The way he is at the moment he is almost unplayable. He is such a strong, powerful kid, just 22, that it is almost frightening to think

what he’ll be like in a few years’ time when he’s 25 or 26.”

Hartson has consistently hit the target despite the loss of Paul Kitson, his own front-line partner, who has been out since September after surgery to repair a torn groin muscle.

Although he is back in training now, Kitson’s return to Premiership action is likely to be delayed until after the rearranged match with Crystal Palace at Upton Park tonight. He is set, instead,

for another outing with the reserves against Swindon Town.

Hartson showed his marksmanship with a powerful header against Palace at Upton Park a month ago, but that goal was wiped out after the game was abandoned when the floodlights failed.

The return should feature West Ham’s Australia winger, Stan Lazaridis, who is due for his first Premiership outing since a groin injury in September.

Report scale of financial

## RUGBY LEAGUE

# Report reveals scale of clubs' financial plight

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

ONLY two Super League clubs were found to be profitable and several have been deemed technically insolvent in a damning independent survey of the game by the accountancy firm, KPMG. The position of first division clubs is even more precarious.

On the eve of a discussion today at the Rugby League Council of a controversial proposal to exclude Keighley and Workington from the first division next season because they are in administration, the revelation that the elite end of the game has debts of nearly £13 million is an embarrassment.

Up to the end of 1996, only Wigan, partly because of the sale of high-profile players,

could boast anything like a reasonable profit. Sheffield were the other club in the black, to the tune of £5,000, after the first season of summer rugby league. However, Sheffield's liabilities, along with those of Bradford, London and Oldham, who were subsequently liquidated, exceeded their assets. In the first division, the position is even more stark. Ten clubs recorded a pre-tax loss and at six, liabilities outstripped assets.

Two years into the five-year, £87 million Super League deal with the News Corporation, parent company of *The Times*, virtually all the money so far has gone to the players. Wage bills at Wigan, Bradford and St Helens exceeded £2 million.

## RUGBY UNION

## Tait and Craig add to Scotland's woes

SCOTLAND'S preparations for their match against South Africa on Saturday were further disrupted yesterday when Alan Tait and James Craig were forced to withdraw from the squad because of hamstring injuries (Mark Souter writes).

Tait was already doubtful and the selectors' fears were confirmed when his injury failed to respond to treatment. Craig pulled a hamstring during Scotland's closed training session yesterday. Tait's absence, in particular, is one that the already depleted Scots can ill afford. The Newcastle centre played in both the British Isles' victories over South Africa in the summer and has been an integral part of the team since returning from rugby league.

Craig, 20, won his first cap in a nervous debut against Australia 11 days ago, but was expected to keep his place in the side which, barring further mishap, will be announced today at Murrayfield. Several options are open to Richie Dixon, the coach, Duncan Hodge, Craig Chalmers or Gregor Townsend could switch to centre in place of Tait, while Craig's replacement will be either Craig Johnstone or Derek Stark.

While Scotland kicked their wounds yesterday, the South Africans' only injury worries concerned Andre Sayman and Henry Hornbill, but both are expected to be fit.

In the light of reported overtures to Mark Andrews, Nick Mallett, the new coach, has called on the South African Rugby Football Union to take steps to ensure that leading players are not enticed overseas before the World Cup. "With the amount of money being handed about, South Africa has to react if they are serious about keeping their players," Mallett said. "I believe Mark Andrews will stay and fulfil his World Cup contract. I know he would prefer to stay in South Africa."

more than half their annual Super League allocation. The money has still not been enough to afford full-time professionalism and the report doubts whether the Rugby Football League (RFU) can successfully impose a salary cap next year.

James Dow, the report's author, welcomed the decisions to offer franchises from 1999 and no relegation from the Super League next season as steps towards financial viability. He supported a reduction in the number of professional clubs, mergers, ground-sharing, expansion into new areas and the appointment by clubs of professional administrators with financial backgrounds.

There has been strong opposition in the past from supporters to suggestions that individual clubs should merge. Dow said: "Although this is an understandable reaction because of historical allegiances, the time has come when local rivalries have to be set aside if the game itself is to survive."

The real dilemma for rugby league is increasing its supporter base. This is the key to helping to pay players and bringing in more revenue through areas like kit merchandising. You need a minimum 10,000 — ideally 15,000 — supporters attending regularly in order to develop a viable income stream, but when you've got 500 people at matches it's impossible."

Maurice Lindsay, the RFU chief executive, said: "Many of the report's recommendations have already been addressed. The original 1994 *Framing the Future* document highlighted the need to improve stadium facilities and clubs' internal management structures, while the recent RFU working party provided more proposals regarding the structure and spread of competitions."

"What they [KPMG] and others must realise is that our game is undergoing evolution, not revolution, and that it takes time to reduce historic debt, and thereafter to create successful management structures and to redevelop stadium facilities."



Reynard, left, and Pollock, of British American Racing, are all smiles during their press conference yesterday

## Tyrrell moves out of the fast lane

Michael Calvin watches as

one of the great names  
of Formula One announces

the sale of his team

**K**en Tyrrell, reduced to a talking head on a closed-circuit television screen by the men who had purchased his heritage, spoke sadly to an unseen audience yesterday afternoon. He was an eerie presence, a haunting reminder of the way that Formula One has been dehumanised in the name of progress.

Tyrrell sold his motor racing team, the emotional core of his life, last Friday. In return for an estimated £18 million, he offered the empty suits of the marketing department at British American Tobacco (BAT) the biggest opportunity of their careers.

Yesterday was payback time. He was

obliged to add an empty tribute to British American Racing, the new team that, from 1999, will be the vehicle for Jacques Villeneuve, the world champion. "We have chosen to sell the company," Tyrrell said. "We have not been forced to sell it."

His image, projected onto three screens at the BBC Radio Theatre, was indistinct and overexposed, but that merely added to the poignancy of the contribution. His was a voice from the past, when a man's character was considered more important than his commercial contacts.

"To compete at the top level in Formula One is very expensive," he said. "We have not been able to put the funding together to enable us to compete." Tyrrell paused and added wistfully: "In spite of recent

events, I have not found the Formula One paddock an unfriendly place."

Next season, his 31st in Formula One, will be Tyrrell's last. His factory in Ockham, Surrey, will close and the best and brightest of his workforce will be assimilated into the new technical team that is being assembled by car builder Adrian Reynard, at a new factory in Brackley, just down the M40 from Silverstone. Details of the new operation were restricted to statements of the obvious. Officials were coy, calculating and insufferably smug.

Martin Broughton, the BAT executive with ultimate responsibility for a £200 million investment, hailed the Government's exemption of Formula One from the European Union ban as "a welcome return to common sense". Perhaps unwise, given the delicacy of the subject, he chose to boast: "Formula One is a global business. There are still more than 75 countries which allow tobacco advertising."

This was supposed to be no mere press conference. It was "an event". To prove the point, Clive James was employed as performing monkey for the corporate organ grinders. He was on auto-pilot, reading an excruciating script from a series of pink cue cards.

Craig Pollock, Villeneuve's manager, surprised no one by refusing to confirm his driver's involvement. He threw the name of Michael Schumacher on to a shortlist of potential drivers with a "let's wait and see", a move that was immediately interpreted as an attempt to secure another set of cheap headlines.

Reynard has already had 600 applications from aspiring technical staff. His long-established doubts about the wisdom of involvement in Formula One have been countered by Pollock's persuasive nature and BAT's budget. Ironically, as the new team was being launched, the FIA, motor sport's governing body, revealed that they had asked Jackie Stewart to prove that his team has a stable financial future. The former triple world champion's response, that he has £25-million backing next season, was impressive.

Tyrrell was Stewart's mentor. They won titles together and share something more than a place in the record books. They have a sense of perspective, a sense of propriety. Regrettably, in the modern equivalent of Formula One, that makes them outsiders. Figures of fun or, worse, pity.

## SPORT IN BRIEF

## Top pair to test Britons in London

■ TENNIS: Yevgeni Kafelnikov and Richard Krajicek will be among the challengers to Greg Rusedski and Tim Henman in the Guardian Direct Cup ATP Tour event at Battersea Park from February 23 to March 1 next year.

The Great Britain team of Danny Sapsford, Martin Lee and Arvind Parmar meet Germany in the first round of the European men's team championship's division in Reggio Calabria, Italy, today.

## China tests

■ DRUGS IN SPORT: China said yesterday that it had stepped up doping tests on its sportsmen and women. "In swimming alone, 576 tests, including 397 out-of-competition checks, were performed between January 1 to October 30 and none turned out positive." Yang Tianle, of the Chinese Olympic Committee's medical commission, said.

## Tough draw

■ HOCKEY: Slough, the leaders of the Women's National League premier division, have been drawn against Leicester, the first division leaders, in the fifth round of the EHA Women's Cup. Hightown, the holders, meet non-league Welton.

## Packers through

■ AMERICAN FOOTBALL: The Green Bay Packers, the defending Super Bowl champions, have become the second National Football Conference team to clinch a play-off berth with a 27-11 victory over the Minnesota Vikings.

## David drops out

■ RUGBY UNION: Tom David, the former Wales flanker, has resigned as the part-time director of rugby at Newport, who are struggling at the foot of the Welsh League premier division.

## SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT  
This is a hand from the 1997 Cavendish Pairs. My reporter tells me that it shows you cannot trust anybody these days.

Dealer East	Love all	IMPs
♦Q855	♦K763	
♦A8	♦AK82	
♦QJ75.	♦AKJ42	
♦Q876		
W	N	S
Pass	1C	Pass
Pass	3S	4H
Pass	6H	
Contract: Six Hearts by South.	Love all	IMPs

It was risky for Peter Weichsel (one of my backgammon teachers 25 years ago) to open just One Club on the North hand. However, that is rarely passed out. When his partner Mike Albert responded One Heart, Weichsel in essence bid Six Hearts. The contract appears to depend fairly and squarely on the club finesse — can you see how declarer might go down?

Albert won the diamond lead and played the jack of hearts, which held the trick. Now he got out; he took the ace of spades, played off the ace of diamonds and ruffed a diamond, cashed one top club and played the king of spades and ruffed a spade. Then he exited with a second heart, hoping that East would have the singleton ace left and so be endplayed.

By Philip Howard

SHALWAR  
a. A code of honour  
b. Trousers  
c. Noodles with gravy

VESPASIANNE  
a. A public loo  
b. A stately dance  
c. A full-fighter's pass

East (George Steiner, but not the G.S. who uses all those long words) took the ace, and cleverly offered declarer a ruff and discard by playing a spade, rather than exiting with his last trump. Of course declarer should reject the Greek gift by ruffing in hand and drawing the last trump, to take the club finesse, but Albert thought he saw a better line. He decided to ruff the spade in dummy and throw a club from hand. Now all he needed was for the king of clubs to stand up and he would have the rest without the club finesse. When the second round of clubs got ruffed, he was wiser and sadder.

□ Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

## KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE  
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

## Needle match

Today's game was the most important clash from the tournament in Belgrade. It ended with Anand to move to the head of the pack while simultaneously condemning Kramnik to a more lonely situation in the tournament table.

As with yesterday's game the opening, in which Black snatches material at the expense of his pawn structure, was typical of the aggressive counterattacking cast of mind of the younger generation of grandmasters. Seizing the initiative seems to be their highest priority. In this particular case, White's sacrifices turned out to be excessive and in spite of obtaining five connected passed pawns, Black's own passed pawns, combined with his extra bishop and knight, were decisive.

White: Vladimir Kramnik

Black: Viswanathan Anand

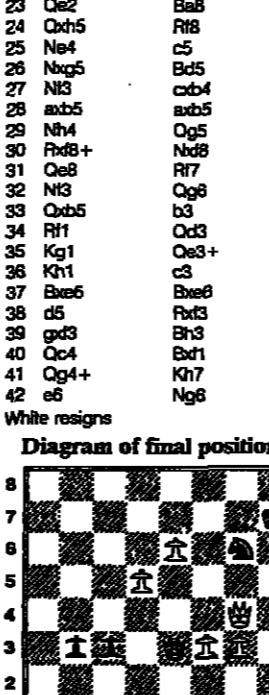
Belgrade, November 1997

## Semi-Slav Defence

1 N16  
2 d4 e5  
3 Nc3 d5  
4 c4 c5  
5 Bg5 h6  
6 Bf4 dxe4  
7 e3 g5  
8 Bg3 b5  
9 Bg2 Bb7  
10 e5 Nh5  
11 a4 Ng7  
12 Nf5 Ng3  
13 Nf7 Kf7  
14 Bg3 Kg8  
15 0-0 Nf7  
16 Bg5 e6  
17 Ne4 Rh7  
18 Nf6 Rh5  
19 Bf4 Rh4  
20 e6 Nf5  
21 Bf5 Nxe3  
22 Nxe3 Nf5  
23 Nf5 Nxe3  
24 Nxe3 Nf5  
25 Nf5 Nxe3  
26 Nxe3 Nf5  
27 Nf5 Nxe3  
28 Nxe3 Nf5  
29 Nf5 Nxe3  
30 Nxe3 Nf5  
31 Nf5 Nxe3  
32 Nxe3 Nf5  
33 Nf5 Nxe3  
34 Nxe3 Nf5  
35 Nf5 Nxe3  
36 Nxe3 Nf5  
37 Nf5 Nxe3  
38 d5 Nf5  
39 Nf5 Nxe3  
40 Nxe3 Nf5  
41 Qg4+ Kf7  
42 e5 Ng6

White resigns

## Diagram of final position



## Times book

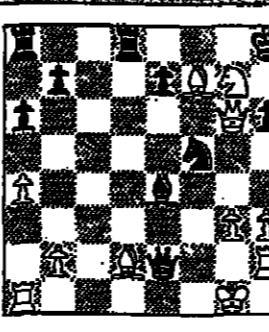
*The Times* Winning Moves 2 contains 240 chess puzzles from international grandmaster Raymond Keene's daily column in *The Times*, and is available now from bookshops or from B. T. Batsford Ltd (tel: 01733 321276 at £6.99 plus postage and packing).

□ Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

By Raymond Keene

Black to play. This position is a variation from the game Kortchnoi — Specular, Brussels 1988.

Both sides have their forces buzzing dangerously close to the opposing king. However, it is Black's move and this enables him to land a decisive blow. Can you see how?



Solution on page 46

## BOXING: REID MAY BE NEXT IF AMERICAN IS BEATEN IN STYLE AT WEMBLEY

## Graham chases world title chance

BY SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT

IF Herol Graham beats Vinny Pazienza, of the United States, at Wembley Arena on Saturday, the man who was known in the Eighties as the best British boxer never to have won a world championship could be in line for a title bout with Robin Reid, of Runcorn, the World Boxing Council (WBC) champion.

Frank Maloney, the promoter, said yesterday that Graham, who is ranked No 4 by the WBC, would be moved up to No 1 and the mandatory challenger position if he impresses against Pazienza, from Rhode Island. "When I sat with Herol in February in that pub in Petticoat Lane when he

did a deal with us, I never imagined that he'd be sitting here in the West End today talking about him topping a bill at Wembley," Warren said.

"It's like a dream. I only took him on a fight-by-fight basis, but when he knocked out Chris Johnson, I quickly rushed a contract under his nose. The WBC have told me that they'll be watching his performance on Saturday and, if he wins well, he will be moved up to No 1 and I expect he will fight Reid by next autumn."

Graham said that it was not

## FOR THE RECORD

## AMERICAN FOOTBALL

NATIONAL LEAGUE (NFL): Minnesota 21, Green Bay 27.

GOLF

MARBELLA: PGA European team championship: Leaders after two rounds: 278.

SCOTTISH: Open: 1. Ian Baker (74); 2. David Toms (75); 3. Tom Kite (75); 4. Tom Watson (



# Managers mucking in with the minions

One of the problems with *Back to the Floor* (BBC2), in which high-flying executives return to the equivalent of the shopfloor for a week, has been that this perfectly good management exercise does not always make perfectly good television. Last night's, the last in the series, smacked more of a management exercise than most — not for a minute during her stint as a nursing auxiliary did Ann Lloyd pretend that she wasn't chief executive of the Frenchay Hospital in Bristol. Indeed, when her shift finished, off came the horrible overalls, on went the suit, and it was back to the office for more meetings. But it still made very good watching.

Of course, the modern health service is almost guaranteed good watching. We watch for hours, transfixed by the relentless search for money, beds and pillows, hoping that one day somebody will

come up with the answer to the great question: "Why does it have to be like that?" A senior casualty nurse provided the easy answer: "I'm sure if we had endless funds we wouldn't have any of the problems that we have," but Lloyd works in a world where the possibility of endless funds is about as same as finding a cure for death. "That's true," she conceded.

As this was television, we had to get the silly part of the exercise over early. Lloyd was fully aware that becoming an auxiliary would mean getting her rubber gloves dirty and so were her new colleagues. She would be starting — and quite possibly finishing — at the bottom. "Excrement," drooled one nurse, "Bodily... things..." saluted another. Anyway, Lloyd was seen — from a sensible distance — gamely emptying all sorts of ghastly things and getting on with it. "No worse than mucking out a horse, I suppose," she said,

using an argument often used by new parents. "Smells worse, sniffs a colleague.

**W**ith the kindergarten stuff out of the way, we moved on to more serious matters, such as pay and pillows. Her temporary boss tackled her diplomatically but firmly on pay for auxiliaries, but it was Kath, her temporary colleague in the sluices, who put her on the spot. Kath was paid £8,000 a year. "How much are you paid?" Lloyd, to her great credit, didn't duck at all. "£70,000." We never discovered what the executive in charge of pillows earned, but possibly not as much as he expected after Lloyd had spent most of her week on the wards trying to find some. Back in the office, she was her steely chief executive self: "I hope he hasn't had his performance-related pay this year." Twenty new pillows arrived with the final credits.

With the distinction between accident emergencies and medical emergencies perhaps a little arcane for most of us, it was Kath's unexpected elevation that stuck in the memory, particularly as you couldn't see a male boss having the imagination to do it. A pointer of things to come came during a break, when Lloyd took her back to the office. "Tea or coffee?" asked the secretary. "Earl Grey, please."

answered Lloyd, still in her overalls. There was a short but career-determining pause. "I'll have an Earl Grey too, please," said Kath. The new general services manager was on her way.

Hospitals feature increasingly large in *Underworld* (Channel 4), the comedy-drama serial written by Andy Hamilton. Aunt Doreen (Annette Crosbie) may have moved her baffling but entertaining subplot into a hospice, but the ward action continues apace. No sooner has one semi-reformed underworld leader paid for a new wing, than another, of the unrefined variety, burns it down, pausing only long enough to push an injured human down a lift shaft.

A trip to the maternity wards should also have been on the cards last night, but the ambulance never made it. Instead, Dennis and Clare's baby was delivered by his childless former wife, Susan (Susan Wooldridge) in a scene that

moved from humour to tragedy in the blink of a tearful eye. Some would describe such writing as genius. I, while not wholly disagreeing, would point out that it can be difficult to keep up with.

**T**he fact that Hamilton is co-produced might explain an occasional tendency for the plot to fall totally asleep for a few minutes. After all, there can be nothing harder than telling yourself that your six-part creation might actually work better in four. If Hamilton had that conversation with himself, Hamilton the writer won, which is why we have a slightly sluggish narrative to watch, but some beautiful observation and acting to admire. Last night, the acting honours went to Trevor Peacock, who plays Dad Middlemass, the pensioned-off but still head-butting former gangland boss, who set things nicely up for next week's conclusion by revealing

that the two feuding gangsters, Middlemass (Alun Armstrong) and Jezzard (Kevin McNally) are half-brothers. I told you it was difficult to keep up with.

No problem keeping up with *Best Friends* (BBC2): it's only about eight minutes long. Peter Waterman and Keith Jackson are best friends, have been since their childhood in Coventry. Waterman is an extremely well known and extremely rich record producer and Jackson is a tool designer. We heard Waterman explaining why he preferred to keep their friendship away from the recording studio ("he's my refuge and sanctuary from work"), but nothing about Waterman's other famous passion: trains. Jackson, who said he felt slightly excluded from Waterman's showbiz life, was interviewed with a model train lying on the carpet of his front room. Does his best mate ever let him play with the real thing?

## BBC1

6.00am *Business Breakfast* (13715)  
7.00 *BBC Breakfast News* (58545)  
9.00 *Good Living*  
9.25 *Style Challenge* (154777)  
9.50 *Kirroy* (T) (224057)  
10.30 *Can't Cook, Won't Cook* (1054932)  
10.55 *The Really Useful Show* (3053406)  
11.35 *Change That in Durham* (2273957)  
12.00 *News* (T) and *weather* (573364)  
12.05pm *Call My Bluff* (204357)  
12.35 *Give Us a Clue* (5577845)  
1.00 *News* (T) and *weather* (58532)  
1.30 *Regional News and Weather* (1774608)  
1.40 *The Weather Show* (88640845)  
1.45 *Neighbours* (T) (72093219)  
2.05 *Quincy* (2/2) (T) (136369)  
2.55 *Wogan's Best of Blankety Blank* (2052605)  
3.30 *Playdays at the Roundabout Stop* (T) (7003154) 3.50 *ChuckleVision* (T) (7083380) 4.10 *Get Your Own Back* (T) (3618970) 4.35 *Out of Tune* (T) (2985580)  
5.00 *Newsround* (7731195) 5.10 *Blue Peter* (T) (6592223)  
5.35 *Neighbours* (T) (835999)  
6.00 *News and Weather* (38)  
6.30 *Regional News Magazine* (30)  
7.00 *Face Value* Does winning the lottery affect the way you dress? (T) (3336)  
7.30 *Tomorrow's World* A new technique to convert blood from one type to another: the airport of the future? (T) (74)  
8.00 *The Wildlife Special: Crocodile David*  
Abercrombie presents an insight into crocodile survivors from the age of the dinosaurs (T) (7497777)  
8.45 *The National Lottery* Live with music by Robbie Williams and a guest appearance from the Driving School's Maureen Rees (T) (200580)  
9.00 *News* (T) regional news and weather (7203)  
9.30 *Adolescence: The Big Eddie's* on a retreat, Patsy in New York, Sally off the scene and only Mother left in the house (T) (T) (58592)  
9.55 *National Lottery Update* (631222)  
10.00 *The X-Files* *Special* undergoes a transformation when she bumps into a lonely divorcee (T) (579654)  
10.45 *Tom Jones* Things look bleak for Tom and Sophie when Lady Belafonte surprises them together, and turns to the minister, Lord Falmer, for advice on keeping the two young lovers apart (T) (6222628) *WALES* 10.45 *Firing Cross* Peter *Parades* Jim (T) (578203) 11.15 *Social Action Week* 1997 (597796) 11.20 *Tom Jones* (973338) 12.15 *Welsh Questions* (50078) 12.45 *Film: Nightbreaker* (563162) 2.15 *News* (7253145) 2.20 *BBC News 24*  
11.40 *Nightbreaker* (1980) Martin Sheen and *Emilio Estevez* play the same career in the drama about a naive doctor who witnesses the use of US soldiers as guinea pigs in the nuclear tests of the 1950s. Directed by Peter Marke (T) (137425)  
1.15 *Sun Weather* (907167)  
1.20 *BBC News 24*

## BBC2

6.00am *Technology: Hidden Power* (41085)  
6.30 *Channel for Communication* (56845)  
7.00 *See Hear Breakfast News* (T) (7 and signing) (357915)  
7.15 *Teleubbines* (T) (2766154) 7.40 *The Perils of Penelope Pitstop* (T) (812715) 8.05 *I'm Never Wrong* (T) (513192) 8.30 *Model Miles* (T) (871537) 8.45 *The Record* (596672) 9.10 *What? Where? When? Why?* (5681951) 9.25 *English Express* (4427405) 9.45 *Words and Pictures* (5080135) 10.00 *Teenagers* (T) (70425) 10.30 *Numberline* (5296768) 10.45 *Watch* (5284951) 11.00 *Around Scotland* (5695628) 11.20 *Job Bank* (171468) 11.40 *Revista* (4162809) 11.55 *Quirky Minutes Plus* (351406) 12.10 *10pm Science in Action* (5695653)  
12.30 *News* (T) (6592229) 12.10 *The Weather* (2737405) 12.20 *Going, Going, Gone* (6493203) 2.40 *News* (T) (7159222) 2.45 *Westminster* (T) (4152736) 3.35 *News* (T) (7150567)  
4.00 *Ready Steady Cook* (13) 4.30 *Through the Keyhole* (2984951) 4.55 *Esther: Baby Snatching* (3730777) 5.30 *Toddy's Day* (67)  
6.00 *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (T) (670796)  
6.45 *Sliders* (T) (895328)  
7.30 *A Date with an Artist* Sculptor Peter Rundt-Page aided by deaf percussionist Evelyn Glennie creates a carving to appeal to the senses of sight, hearing and touch, while photographer Catherine Yass paints a portrait to commemorate an elderly East End couple's house move (T) (16)  
8.00 *Gary Rhodes* A retirement meal for a Bedales housemistress (T) (7086)  
8.30 *Home Front* The leather revival; sprucing up a boring staircase (T) (65933)  
9.00 *Modern Times: Arch People* The world of London's 4,500 converted railway arches (T) (845067)  
9.50 *Breaking Point* A couple put the painful memories of the past behind them and start afresh (T) (235999)  
10.30 *Newbright* (168951)  
11.15 *Prison* Wendy Colete Kershaw reveals the problems facing inmates at the mother-and-baby unit inside Styal Women's Prison in Cheshire (504086)  
11.45 *Building Sights*, USA The Nicola restaurant in Los Angeles (774319)  
11.55 *Weather* (521390)  
12.00 *The Midnight Hour* (67100)  
12.30 *Learning Zone* Edwina Currie (684013) 12.45 *Leaders and Dictators: Churchill and Hitler* (T) (6508182) 1.35 *Medical Research*: Magne, Carta (5449268) 2.00 *Religious Education* (56855) 4.00 *Italianismo* (64655) 5.00 *Nursing Update* (5574) 5.30 *Nursing Update* (562029)

Arab mosque and Imam (9.00pm)

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## HTV

6.00am *GMTV* (202628)  
9.25 *Supermarket Sweep* (555425)  
9.55 *Regional News* (730867)  
10.00 *The Time, the Place* (57651)  
10.30 *This Morning* (T) (9789057)  
12.20pm *Regional News* (9799048)  
12.30 *News* (T) and *weather* (5686970)  
12.55 *Shortland Street* (567161) 1.25 *Home and Away* (T) (7391722) 1.50 *Cuisine* (T) (9226131) 2.20 *Countdown to Christmas* (T) (5461604) 2.50 *Vanessa* (T) (4318357)  
3.20 *News* (T) (9163375)  
3.25 *Regional News* (5563336)  
3.30 *Tots TV* (2430425) 3.40 *The Singing Pool* (1087048) 4.30 *Neil's Art Attack* (3605229) 4.45 *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* (297632)  
5.10 *WALES: Prime Time Diary* (T) (5685241)  
5.10 *No Naked Flames — the Work Experience* (5685241)  
5.40 *News* (T) and *weather* (671787)  
6.00 *Home and Away* (T) (26)  
6.25 *Regional Weather* (721883)  
6.30 *Regional News* (86)  
7.00 *Emmerdale* (T) (56564)  
7.30 *Coronation Street* Jon makes an announcement (T) (70)  
8.00 *Des O'Connor Tonight* With Victoria Wood, Janet Jackson, Lee Evans, Ben Elton and Louise (9777)

Bil and John Reilly (9.00pm)

As HTV West except:

## CENTRAL

As HTV West except:  
5.15-1.25 *A Country Practice* (5671661)  
5.10-5.40 *Shortland Street* (5665241)  
5.50-6.00 *Air Watch* (5692970)  
6.05 *Central News* (202693)  
6.55-7.00 *Lifeline* (769203)  
12.50am *Film: Bite the Bullet* (1975). A western adventure starring Gene Hackman, James Coburn and Candice Bergen. Directed by Richard Brooks (8736529)  
3.10 *The Mysterious West* (5222278)  
3.40 *The Good Sex Guide Late* (6851029)  
4.35 *Central Jobfinder* (97) (6724704)  
5.20 *Asian Eye* (4720365)

As HTV West except:

5.10-12.30 *12.30 Illuminations* (9799048)  
12.55 *Home and Away* (770951)  
1.20-1.50 *Emmerdale* (T) (7373924)  
5.10-7.00 *Westcountry Live* (58116)

As HTV West except:

5.10-6.40 *Home and Away* (5685241)

6.00 *Meridian Tonight* (26)

6.30-7.00 *Put it to the Test* (86)

10.40 *The Pier* (950311)

11.05 *The Listings* (701203)

11.10 *Highlander* (936360)

12.00 *Meridian Masterclass* (9717636)  
5.00 *Freescreeen* (9520)

As HTV West except:

12.19pm *Anglia Air Watch* (9701883)

12.55-1.25 *The Fashion Police* (5671661)

5.10-5.40 *Shortland Street* (5665241)

6.23 *Anglia Weather* (722512)

6.25-7.00 *Anglia News* (1010999)

6.00-7.00 *Anglia Air Watch* (963593)

As HTV West except:

9.00-10.30 *The Big Fashion* (31893)

10.45-11.15 *Meridian Tonight* (26)

12.00-1.30 *Anglia Weather* (722512)

1.30-2.00 *Anglia News* (1010999)

2.00-3.00 *Anglia Weather* (722512)

3.00-4.00 *Anglia News* (1010999)

4.00-5



## FOOTBALL 44

Leading marksman sets his sights on Cup record

# SPORT

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 3 1997

Fifa formula leaves anxious Hoddle fearing 'group of death' in World Cup draw

## Hopes recede as England take pot luck

FROM OLIVER HOLT, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT, IN MARSEILLES

THE Fifa delegation had walked off the stage. One after another, Sepp Blatter, Lennart Johansson and Michel Platini descended the steps into the sea of cameramen and lights. Behind them, two officials took the replica of the World Cup off the table and packed it in bubble-wrap. And then, in the conference hall at the Palais de Congrès, the agonising over England's fate began.

Some minutes earlier, Blatter, the general secretary of the world governing body, had confirmed the worst fears of Glenn Hoddle, the coach, and legions of England supporters when he revealed that the failure to qualify for the 1994 finals had effectively cost them the chance to be numbered among the top seeds in France next summer.

As expected, Brazil, France, Germany, Argentina, Italy, Spain, Holland and Romania were placed in that privileged category. To make matters worse for England, the system that Fifa will use to make the draw here tomorrow raises the uncomfortable prospect of Hoddle's team finding itself pitched into a "group of death", condemned to a grim struggle against three highly-rated teams just to make the last 16.

Fifa calculated the top seeds on a complex formula based on a combination of performances in the past three World Cup finals and its own world rankings over the past two years. England finished joint ninth with Bulgaria.

"The decisive element was the column that registered zero for 1994," Keith Cooper, the Fifa director of communications, said. Their omission, coupled with Fifa's novel formula for the draw — which divides the remaining 24 teams into three

bunches based on geographical considerations, but precludes any of the eight groups including more than two European teams — means that the bad luck of the draw could place England with Brazil, Croatia and Nigeria, with only two teams able to qualify.

The permutations, though, are endless. At the more optimistic end of the scale lies the possibility that England — or Scotland — could be drawn with Romania, the weakest of the seeds. Jamaica and Iran.

As the repercussions of the seedings were examined and re-examined — and moments of levity amid the furrowing of

England are planning an international match against the United States as part of their five-game build-up to the World Cup finals next year. Subject to the teams not being grouped together in the World Cup draw tomorrow, they will play in Washington on March 24 or 25. Croatia are also keen to play England and are among around thirty possible opponents that the FA has been considering.

brows were sought concocting a group comprising Argentina, England, the United States and Iran — it gradually became apparent that the best outcome might be a happy medium that saw England drawn with one strong team and two weaker ones.

Platini, a member of the organising committee, made it clear that he had wanted geographical considerations again to be taken into account so that Spain, for instance, would be placed in a group whose matches were played in venues in the south and west of France, such as Toulouse and Bordeaux (group B), and not Paris and Lens (group F).

His recommendations, though, had been ignored. "If we allocate teams to specific stadia," Johansson, the president of Uefa, the European governing body, said, "there

will not be much of a draw left."

That also raises the possibility of England having to play a match either in Saint-Etienne or Nantes, the only two of the ten World Cup stadiums still to have perimeter fencing. In Nantes, it is the mayor who objects to dismantling them in Saint-Etienne, it is the chief of police.

Take the fences away and people are not aggressive," Blatter said. "Fans become aggressive because they are behind bars. It is prisoners and wild animals who should be behind bars."

A few hours after he spoke, Fifa sources revealed that the English and Italian football associations would be fined after the trouble that marred their qualifying tie in Rome on October 11, a punishment that

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Hoddle, though, boosted by the news that Sol Campbell would not be suspended for the first group game, ended on a note of overriding optimism, stressing that the World Cup would be a chance for England's young players such as Paul Scholes and David Beckham to "make their name and become world superstars". The pressure was not on them, Hoddle said, but on more experienced players such as David Seaman, Alan Shearer and Paul Gascoigne. "The world will know they are coming," he said.

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"I think Havelange has never forgiven the fact that I told the truth about Teixeira," Pelé said yesterday. "It's very sad, but I have a duty to speak against corruption." Teixeira denied the allegations at the time, but took no further action.

Before the 1994 draw, Pelé had given a detailed account

## Pele suffers repeat of snub at World Cup ceremony

By ROB HUGHES

1990, Gremio in 1992 and Fluminense this year were all spared the drop after finishing bottom.

It appears that Havelange, whose word in Fifa has been law since 1974, has no opponents within the executive who dare intervene. Fifa statutes encourage him to do this because they state that no individual can take to law the authority of a football association or federation.

"It is farcical," a former Fifa employee observed. "Pelé is the greatest player the game has known and the best ambassador and through one man's spite, he is prevented from his rightful place at the table. I just hope Pelé remains strong, because these overblown affairs are beneath him. They are indeed."

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